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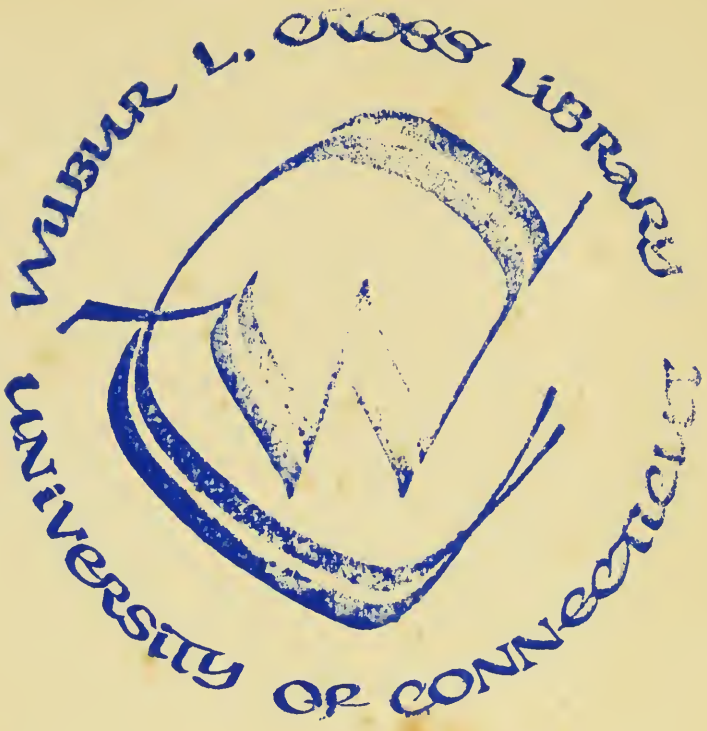
M. Foster

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# *Chap-Books*

*and*

# *Folk-Lore Tracts.*

*Edited by*

*G. L. Gomme, F.S.A.*

*and*

*H. B. Wheatley, F.S.A.*

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*First Series.*

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# THE HISTORY

OF

# THE SEVEN WISE MASTERS OF ROME.

PRINTED FROM

THE EDITION OF WYNKYN DE WORDE, 1520,

AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE VILLON SOCIETY.

1885.

# Introduction.

The history of the *Seven Wise Masters* forms an important epoch in the history of European popular stories, because it affords the most remarkable evidence of the literary descent and origin of stories, as distinct from a traditional descent. Professor Comparetti in his *Researches respecting the Book of Sindibad*, published by the Folk-Lore Society, Mr. Clouston in his *Bákhtyar Nama* and in his *Book of Sindibad*, two privately printed books, and Mr. Wright in his *Sevyn Sages*, printed by the Percy Society in 1846, have practically exhausted the literary history of this famous collection of stories. Shortly summarised from these three sources the main facts are these. There was an ancient original Indian book of stories which became so popular that it was copied frequently, and thus handed down from one generation to another. From this book two separate groups of texts have descended. To the first belong all the texts in the Eastern languages; to the other belong the *Dolopathos*, the *Historia Septem Sapientum*, the *Erasto*, and other numerous texts of the various European literatures of the Middle Ages. With the Eastern group of texts we have now

nothing to do beyond saying that Professor Comparetti has restored, in the scholarly book above mentioned, the form of the original text for the guidance of the modern student. The Western group of texts has a history of its own quite apart from its Eastern origin. It has kept the original framework, but it has varied the setting ; and this variation will be found of great interest to the student of popular tradition. Before, however, we come to this part of the subject, let us see the kind of work with which we are dealing. The framework of the romance is as follows : A young prince, falsely accused by the wife of the king, his father, of having attempted to offer her violence, is defended by seven sages, who relate a series of stories to show the deceits of women, the queen at the same time urging the death of the accused prince by the example of stories told by herself. This system of story-telling is practically the same as that adopted in the *Arabian Nights.* Boccaccio adopted this plan in his *Decameron ;* Chaucer adopted it in his *Canterbury Tales.*

Among the Eastern texts is a famous one in Hebrew, dating as far back as the first half of the thirteenth century. Under the title of *Historia Septem Sapientum Romæ*, a Latin translation of this was made by Dam Jehans, a monk of the abbey of Haute Selve, in the diocese of Nancy, in the thirteenth century. The earliest printed copy of this version that I have been able to find is one printed at Cologne in 1490, of which I shall say something a little further on.

It was through this Latin version that the work was communicated to nearly all the languages of Western Europe; and in 1520 a translation into English was printed by the famous printer Wynkyn de Worde. A fine copy of this is preserved in the British Museum, and from it is printed the text of the present version. One or two pages are missing from this copy, and the passages are restored from the earliest chap-book version which I have been able to discover—namely, that printed in 1671 at London, and belonging to the British Museum. This chap-book version is nearly identical with the Wynkyn de Worde, with the simple alteration of the spelling to the modern forms. One curious variation, however, illustrating the force of the change of religious opinions at the time of the Reformation, is well worth noting. On page 173 of our text will be found related how the murdered children of the Emperor Lodwyke were found alive singing "of ye moost blessed vyrgyne Mary, aue Maria gracia plena dn̄s tecum," but in the chap-book of 1671 it is said they were singing praises to the Almighty.

Since 1671 many chap-book versions have been issued, and I have succeeded in obtaining a copy still published in Dublin. These later versions are all much deteriorated from the original. Besides the 1671 edition, there are the following: London 1684, 1687, and 1697; Glasgow 1713; London [1750]; Newcastle 1750; London 1780-7 [1785]; Boston 1794; London 1805; Warrington 1815. And I have no

doubt that it has been continually reproduced until the present day.

Besides the closeness of the translation of the prose version of Wynkyn de Worde, one curious feature to be noted is the series of illustrations. It is well known that German woodcuts supplied English books with illustrations,* and this is a good instance of the practice. In the *Bibliographer* (vol. ii. p. 70) Mr. W. M. Conway has told the history of the woodcuts of the Lubeck edition of the *Seven Wise Men.* It was first printed in April, 1488, with the name of Claes Leeu, probably a brother of Gerard Leeu. In 1490 appeared another edition printed at Cologne by J. Koelhof de Lubeck, to whom the blocks must have been lent. He returned them to Leeu with the exception of one, which was either retained by him or lost on the journey ; and the imperfect set, a new block being made by some other hand to replace the lost one, was employed in the edition printed by Leeu on the 6th November, 1490. One of the cuts (see p. 21) represents the Emperor coming angrily into the chamber of his wife with a drawn sword in his hand and reproaching her with her infidelity. She is seated on a chair on the right, with her hands clasped in an attitude rather of shyness than fear or remorse. One reason for this seems to be discoverable from the fact that along the top of the bed behind, the words *Ave regina cœlorum* can be traced carved in reverse ; and it is quite possible that the whole cut, with the

* See *Antiquary*, vol. v. p. 157.

exception of the figure of the Emperor, was copied from some print representing the Annunciation.

Both these editions, that by J. Koelhof de Lubeck and that printed by Gerard Leeu on 6th November, 1490, are in the library of the British Museum, the latter under the title of *Historia de Calumnia Novercali.* This book has a preface not contained in the other edition, and it formed the subject of a communication to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1767, p. 541, in a letter signed T. From this letter it would appear that later editions were issued. The preface quoted in the letter is the same as the preface in the British Museum copy, but the words of the latter are much more contracted than the writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* indicates was the case with his copy. This letter is, I think, worth reproducing, as it conveys some useful information. It is as follows :—

"I lately met with a mutilated copy of a book, which to me, at least, appears a curiosity. It bears for its title, *Historia de Calumnia Novercali:* an history now commonly sold at stalls for the entertainment of English children, under the title of *The History of the Seven Wise Masters ;* with which last-mentioned book mine agrees as to the substance and order of the tales, but differs considerably from it in the form and manner of relating them.

"It is printed in sixteens, in the common Gothic character of the time (the beginning, as I judge, of the 16th century), an *English* or *black* face approaching to a *Roman,* on a *pica* body,

and with many abbreviations, and is ornamented with wooden cuts of the size of the pages, which, considering their age, are by no means contemptible.

"The preface runs thus :—

"'Compositâ pridem *Calumniæ Novercalis Historia* quæ *Septem Sapientum* dicitur, pulchro quidem argumento, pulchris etiam ac memoratu dignis tractata exemplis, in utramq: partem & defensionis & condemnationis sive vera sive ficta sit, nihil ad te attinere puto mi *Gerarde:* magis autem quid doceat adverte, intelligimus ex ea & qui sint malarum mulierum, & pravorum liberorum, & zelotyporum itemq: delirorum senum aliarumq: personarum mores atq: fortunæ variâ ratione, ut quid caveri quidve eligi oporteat agnoscamus. Cum autam nominum quorundam ratio temporibus satis respondere visa non esset, & textus nimium fluxus minimeq: cohœrens videretur non indignum judicavi quo tibi morem gererem id postulanti, paululum mutatis verbis obmissisq: nominibus ne legentem offendant, re ipsa integra servata, hanc narationem efferre ; ne quid inventori laudis aut inventioni veritatis detractum esse videatur : imposito potius nomine *Calumniæ Novercalis* qualis & Phædræ fuit is Hyppolitum ; et simili quoq: genere uxoris Putipharis in Joseph Hebræum ; & senum illorum in Susannam ; ut eo nomine historia hæc majorem notitiam gratiamq: apud lectores sit habitura.'

"From hence it appears that this book is an alteration and improvement of a more ancient work, intitled *Historia Septem*

*Sapientum*, and, as the particulars here said to be altered are retained unaltered in the English translation, it should seem that the English history is translated from a performance of a more early date than this."

The woodcuts of the Wynkyn de Worde are not identical with the Cologne edition, but copies, having been decidedly improved. All these are reproduced in facsimile in the present edition. Owing to the missing pages, one or two of these illustrations are not given in the British Museum copy. The Cologne edition contains a frontispiece plate, one after the first two as printed on pages 4 and 8 of our text, and two printed at the end of the book, making four in all, which are not contained in the British Museum copy of the Wynkyn de Worde.

We will now consider the stories given in this version of the *Seven Wise Masters*. Although the framework, as I have pointed out, is ancient, the setting has been altered. The stories that suited Eastern fancy did not suit Western; and accordingly we have a considerable variation. In order to have the stories clearly before us, the following analysis will be found useful:—

(1.) *The first example of the Empress.*—In the garden of a Roman burgess was a tree famed for its cure of all diseases—the burgess one day discovered a "fair young imp"—this was planted and put under the care of the gardener—the young tree did not flourish—the burgess commanded the branches of the overshading old tree to be cut down to the ground—the young

tree then did not flourish—the burgess commanded the old tree to be cut down to the ground – the young tree died.

(2.) *The example of the first Master.*—A knight had one son —also a greyhound and a falcon—the knight went to a tourney —a serpent in the hall attacked the child—the falcon roused the attention of the greyhound—the greyhound fought the serpent and killed it—the greyhound, wounded, went and laid down by the cradle of the child, which became covered with his blood—the nurses coming in thought the child was killed by the greyhound—they tell their mistress, who tells the knight—the knight kills the greyhound—he afterwards discovers his error and repents.

(3.) *The second example of the Empress.*—An Emperor had a forest in which was a boar that destroyed all men going through the forest—the Emperor proclaimed that whoever should slay the boar should marry his daughter—a shepherd by stratagem slew the boar, and married the daughter.

(4.) *The example of the second Master.*—In a city there was an ancient knight who had married a young wife—there was a law or custom in that city that whoever was found in the streets after the ringing of a certain bell should be put in the pillory—the wife had a paramour, and every night she went to her lover. One night the husband woke and missed his wife, and on her return would not let her in—she went to the well and pretended to drown herself—the husband came out of the house to help his wife out of the well—she then ran into the house and

locked the doors, and her husband being found in the streets by the watch, was taken to prison and on the morrow put in the pillory.

(5.) *The third complaint of the Empress.* — There was in Rome a knight that had two daughters and one son—the knight, by hunting and tournaments, spent all his substance. There was an emperor at that time who had a tower full of gold—the knight and his son agreed to steal some of the gold —the keeper of the tower put a vessel full of pitch that the robber might fall in—the second time the knight and his son went the knight fell into the pitch—the son cut off the father's head and hid it, that the body should not be recognised—the daughters of the knight made a great outcry on seeing their father's body dragged through the streets—the son then wounded himself, and the officers believed his story that it was on account of his wound that his sisters made lamentations.

(6.) *The example of the third Master.*—There was a rich burgess that had a "pie" which he loved and taught to speak—his wife had a lover who visited her in the absence of the burgess —the pie threatened to tell the burgess—the wife imitated rain and hail and snow on the bird's cage and nearly killed her— when the burgess returned the pie told him that his wife's lover had stayed all night with her, and that the hail, rain, and snow that night had nearly killed him—the master hearing that the night had been quite fine, killed the bird, thinking it had told lies—he afterwards found out the truth.

(7.) *The fourth example of the Empress.*—There were once seven wise masters who governed Rome under an Emperor, who by their artifices they made blind whenever he left the palace—the Emperor, on pain of death, desired the seven wise masters to cure him—the masters discover a child who shewed the meaning of dreams—they brought him to the Emperor—the child discovered in the Emperor's bedchamber a well which had seven springs—the child commanded the wise masters to be killed, one at a time, and thrown into the well—the well and springs vanished.

(8.) *The example of the fourth Master.*—There was an old knight who married a young wife—the wife wished to have a lover, but on the persuasion of her mother tried the knight three times: 1st, by cutting down a favourite tree—2nd, by killing a favourite hound—3rd, by destroying everything on the table at a banquet. The two first the knight forgave, the third time he brought a barber who opened veins in the wife's arms—the wife thereupon said she would be content with her husband.

(9.) *The fifth example of the Empress.*—There reigned in Rome an Emperor who was covetous and loved gold above all things.—In the city was a wise master who made a tower, and in it as many images as there were provinces governed by Rome, and when there was any rebellion or dispute in these distant provinces the images rang a bell, and so informed the people. The kings of these provinces consulted together how best to defeat Rome. Four knights undertook to get the images

and tower destroyed if they could have four tons of gold—they took this and went to Rome—and represented themselves as soothsayers, and pretended to discover by dreams quantities of gold which they had previously hidden—they obtained permission of the Emperor to dig under the tower for more gold—undermined the tower and rode away—the counsellors of the Emperor put him to death for betraying the image to their enemies.

(10.) *The example of the fifth Master.*—There was a famous physician named Ypocras—he had a nephew named Galienus, who in time excelled Ypocras—the king of Ungary sent for Ypocras to cure his son—Ypocras sent Galienus instead—Galienus on seeing the sick child said to the queen that the king was not its father, and demanded to know who was—the queen told him the truth and Galienus cured the child. Ypocras on hearing from Galienus that he had cured the child killed him by craft—Ypocras was taken grievously sick, and his scholars and disciples were unable to heal him—He knew that for the death of Galienus he was made sick—confessed from envy he had slain him, and died.

(11.) *The sixth example of the Empress.*—There was a king marvellously deformed in his visage so that women hated and abhorred him—the king desired his steward to bring a fair and beauteous woman, and promised a large sum of money to the woman—the steward from covetousness insisted on his own wife going to the king and thus obtaining the money—the king

found out that the steward had undone his own wife, banished him on pain of death and kept the wife. The king assembled a great army to conquer Rome, but by the stratagems of seven wise masters there was defeated with great slaughter and killed.

(12.) *The example of the sixth Master.*—There was an emperor of Rome who had three knights whom he loved above all others. There was also in the city an ancient knight who had a fair young wife—this wife would sit at her window looking into the street and sing. The three knights at different times passed her window and fell in love with her—they each offered her a hundred florins—she consented to receive them, promising to send for them on a suitable opportunity. She told her husband, and suggested that when the knights came he should kill them and keep the hundred florins - the husband consented and killed each of the knights—the wife got her brother to dispose of the first body, and by telling him the corpse had come back again, of the other two—the husband afterwards quarrelled with his wife and struck her—she in revenge told how he had murdered the three knights—they were both drawn at a horse's tail and hanged.

(13.) *The seventh example of the Empress.*—A king loved his wife above all things and locked her up always in a strong castle and kept the keys himself. A knight in distant parts dreamed of a fair queen whose love he would win—the queen dreamt the same night of the knight—the knight travelled about till he came to the queen's tower, and knew her for the

lady of his dream.—He entered the king's service—fought bravely, was made the king's steward, and gained permission of the king to build a place adjoining the castle.—He built a secret passage to the queen's rooms—gained her love—she gave him a ring the king had given her—the king saw the ring on the knight's hand and demanded of the queen the ring he had given her—she showed it to the king having previously got it back from the knight—the knight asked the king to be present at a banquet at which would be his lady love—presented the queen to the king as a lady of his own country—the king after the banquet went to the queen's rooms, found her there, and thought he had been mistaken a second time—the knight asked the king to be present at his wedding and to give the bride away—the king gave the queen to the knight and saw them sail away from the city—went back to the castle and found out how he had been deceived.

(14.) *The example of the seventh Master.*—A knight had a fair young wife whom he tenderly loved—one day she cut her hand and the sight of her blood killed her husband—she bewailed his death greatly—would not leave the grave—her friends made a little house close by where she might stay and get food. When a trespasser against the law was hanged the sheriff was obliged to watch all night by the gallows, and if the body was stolen the sheriff had to lose his land and his life. It happened soon after that a man was hanged, and the sheriff watched by the gallows—he saw the little house, asked per-

mission to enter to warm himself—the sheriff went back to the gallows and found the body stolen—told the lady, who advised him, if he would marry her, to take up her dead husband and hang him on the gallows in place of the thief—when the body was dug up, the sheriff said he could not hang her husband up as he was, the thief having lost two front teeth, his ears, and was otherwise mutilated—the lady mutilated her husband in a corresponding manner—she reminded the sheriff of his promise to marry her—he refused, and killed her.

(15.) *The example of Dioclesian, the King's son.*—A knight had one son, who was sent away to learn, and returned well favoured—as they sat at table a nightingale sang—the son interpreted the song to mean that he should become great and be waited upon by his father and mother—the knight was angered, and cast his son into the sea—the son swam to land, from which he was rescued by a ship—the shipmen sold him to a duke—the duke took him into favour—the king of the country (Egypt) summoned his council to tell him why ravens followed him wherever he went, and promised to give his daughter to him who would interpret the event—the child, who went with the duke, interpreted the event, and the ravens left the country—the king thereupon took the child, Alexander, to live with him—before marrying his daughter, Alexander asked leave to visit the court of Titus—leave was granted, and he went and was much loved—there came also the son of the King of France, Lodwyke—the two, Lodwyke and Alexander, were

much alike—the emperor had a daughter whom Lodwyke fell in love with—Alexander used to attend her—she fell in love with him—he, however, allowed Lodwyke to attend her in his stead—he assisted Lodwyke in his suit—presented gifts to her three times on behalf of Lodwyke—finally she consented to receive Lodwyke—the knights found out the intrigue, and sought to slay Lodwyke, but Alexander defended his friend—letters came to tell Alexander of the death of the King of Egypt—Alexander went to Egypt—Lodwyke at parting gave him a ring—Guydo, son of the King of Spain, then came to the court—he found out Lodwyke with the emperor's daughter, and told the emperor—a day of battle between Lodwyke and Guydo was appointed—Lodwyke was afraid to meet him, and by advice of the emperor's daughter got the day of battle adjourned, and went to Alexander—Alexander was going to be married to his betrothed—being so like Lodwyke he agreed to take his place, and Lodwyke was to take Alexander's place at the wedding, and to put a naked sword between him and Alexander's wife on the night of their marriage—Alexander went, as Lodwyke, and defeated and slew Guydo—Lodwyke, as Alexander, married his betrothed and kept the compact of putting a sword between them—when Alexander returned his wife, annoyed at him not loving her the first night, would not accept his embraces—she grew to love a knight, and by poison made Alexander a leper—he was driven from Egypt—he travelled to Lodwyke's court (who had succeeded Titus on the

throne)—he made himself known to Lodwyke—Lodwyke asked his master to cure his friend—they could not do so—the only cure was revealed to Alexander in a dream—it was for Lodwyke to kill his two sons and wash his body with the blood of them—Lodwyke does this, and his wife afterwards agrees to it—Alexander is restored—the sons come to life again—Lodwyke assists Alexander in the recovery of Egypt—after a time he resolved to see his father and mother—he goes to them without revealing himself— they wait upon him—he then reveals himself to them, forgave them, and took them, honoured, to Egypt.

Of these fifteen stories only three are the same as those given in the *Book of Sindibad*, as published by Professor Comparetti—namely, No. 2, the example of the first Master, which is told by the fifth Master in the Sindibad version ; No. 6, the example of the third Master, which is told by the first Master of the Sindibad version ; and No. 11, the sixth example of the Empress, which is told by the fourth Master of the Sindibad version. No. 3, the second example of the Empress, may perhaps be a variant of the fifth example of the Empress in the Sindibad version. The remaining stories then might, *prima facie*, be considered of Western origin ; and perhaps genuine Folk-Tales thus early enshrined in literature. No. 4 is to be found in Peter Alfonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis* and in the *Decameron*. And Mr. Wright, in his Introduction to *The Sevyn Sages* (Percy

Society), p. liii. says he heard the same story told traditionally in an English country town of a townsman who had a scolding unruly wife. No. 5 is a variant of the legend of Rhampsinitus, king of Egypt, as told by Herodotus; and a similar legend is given in Pausanias, lib. ix. c. 37. No. 7 contains some of the incidents of Merlin's story told by the Chroniclers. No. 10, the example of the fifth Master, is something like Campbell's "Fearachur Leigh," No. xlvii. of his *Highland Stories* (vol. ii. p. 161). No. 13 bears an analogy to the plot of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus. Upon the entire question of the occurence elsewhere of these stories I would refer to Mr. Clouston's *Book of Sindibad* privately printed in 1884.

There are one or two curious words and expressions which may be of use to the philologist, but the reader will find that the language used is mainly that of the present day with a different spelling. Some of the difficulties of this style have been obviated by the insertion, where necessary, of letters left out in contracted words, and these insertions are printed in italics to distinguish them from the original.

¶ Here begynneth thystorye of y^e^ vii. Wyse Maysters of rome conteynynge ryghe (*sic*) fayre ⁊ ryght ioyous narracōns, ⁊ to y^e^ reder ryght delectable.

Somtyme in y^e^ Cyte of Rome was an Emperour named Poncianus a man of grete wysdome. He toke to his wyfe a kynges doughter that fayre ⁊ goodly was, and to all people gracyous ⁊ to her husbonde ryght dere, and cōceyued of hym and bare hym a sone named Dyoclesian. The chylde grewe ⁊ of all people was beloued. And whan he was of the aege of seuen yeres, his moder thempresse fyll sore seke / felynge herselfe that she myghte not lyue: sent after her lorde themperour a messenger that he sholde come without taryenge yf euer he wolde see her on lyue. And whan he was comen she sayd vnto hym, O my lorde of this ifyrmyte may I not escape. Wherfore I humbly requyre you of a lytell petycyon before my deth. He answered, Desyre what ye wyll, for I shall nothynge denye you. Then sayd she, After my deth ye shall take an other wyfe as it behoueth. I aske ⁊ pray you y^t^ she upon my sōn haue no gouernaūce or power, but y^t^ he be kepte and nourysshed fer from her, ⁊ y^t^ he may

gete to hym connynge and wysdome. The Emperour sayd, My moste dere wyfe, your petycyon in all thynges shall be fulfylled ꝛ perfourmed. This sayd she torned her towardes the wall and yaue vp the goost ꝛ dyed. Many dayés after y^e^ Emperour bewáyled ꝛ morned her deth, ꝛ longe tyme after her buryenge he shewed his heuynes ꝛ sorowe, ꝛ wold ī no wyse mary or be ioyful.

How the Emperoure to the seuen wyse maysters commytted and delyuered his sone to lerne.

Upon a tyme as the emperour laye in his bed he bethought hym inwardly vpon his sone, sayenge in his herte, I haue only but one sone y^e^ whiche shall be myn heyre. It is good whyles he is yonge that he be sette to lerne connynge and wysdome by the whyche he maye after my dethe gouerne ⁊ rule the empyre. Erly whan he was rysen vp from his bedde. he lete to be called afore hym his lordes of his counseyll and of them toke aduyse what best therin was to done. And they answerd, Lorde, in Rome are vii wyse maysters they excelle and excede all other men in cunnynge ⁊ lettrature, lete them be sent for and delyuer to them your sone to nourysshe ⁊ to lerne. That vnderstandynge the emperour sent his letters sealed with his seale to y^e^ vii. maysters that they incontinent sholde come to hym without delay. And they anone came before themperour. and he demaũded yf they knewe wherfore y^t^ he had sente for them. They answered the cause ne your wyll we knowe not/ but yf please you to shewe vs your mynde ⁊ entent we ben redy to fulfyll it to the vttermoste of our powers. To whome y^e^ noble Emperour sayde, I haue but one sone the which I shal delyuer vnto you to nourysshe and to teche. so that by your

doctryne ꝯ wysdome. he maye the more wysly guyde and gouerne y^e^ empyre after my decesse.

¶ The fyrste mayster named Pantyllas sayde, Lorde delyuer too me your sone ꝯ I shall teche hym as moche connȳge w^t^in vii. yere as I and all my felowes can. Then spake the seconde mayster that named was Lentulus, Syr of longe tyme I haue serued you, ꝯ hytherto I haue had no maner reward. I demaunde nothyng elles of you but that ye delyuer me your sone to lerne and gouerne. and I shall make hym as connynge within vi. yere as I ꝯ all my felowes be. The thyrde mayster sayd that had to name Craton, My lorde many tymes haue I ben with you vpon the se in peryll of my lyfe / ꝯ of you haue I had no maner of rewarde, yf that I myghte for my rewarde obteyne that ye wolde wouchesauf to commytte your sone vnder my rule ꝯ gouernaunce, I sholde enfourme hym as moche within v. yere. yf his wit therto wyll attayne as I and my felowes can. Tho stode vp the fourth mayster that to name had Malquydrac ryght lene of body ꝯ sayd, My lorde calle to your remembraunce how that I and al my predecessours haue serued emperours ꝯ haue receyued no maner of rewarde. Wherfore I shal aske none other thȳge but y^t^ ye wyll delyuer me your sone to enfourme ꝯ teçhe / ꝯ I shall make hym to take asmoche scyence ꝯ wysdome within foure yere as I and al my felowes haue lerned in all our lyues. Than spake y^e^ fyfth mayster y^t^ was called Joseph, lorde I am old ꝯ many tyms I am called to your coũseyl / ꝯ y^t^ my coũseyll ye knowe well

hath auayled ¶ p*er*fyted you ¶ yet I folowe y^e^ same. But I desyre no more saue to delyuer me your sone ¶ I shal enstructe ¶ enfourme hȳ in as moche conynge ¶ scyence that he w^t^in iii yere shal profyte ¶ wyte as moche as I ¶ alle my felowes. tho came forth the syxte mayster that was named Cleophas whiche sayd lyke the other p*ro*mysynge to lerne ¶ enfourme y^e^ chylde in alle theyr connynges w^t^in two yere. The seuenth muyster (*sic*) rose vp ¶ sayd, which also desyred the chylde ¶ promysed for to lerne hym w^t^in one yere y^e^ scyences and wysdome of them all. As all this was done. Than the Emperour sayde my trusty frendes I am moche bounden to thanke you all, and euery of you, for that eueryche of you haue so effectuelly desyred my sone to nouryssh ¶ lerne. If I sholde now commytte hym to one and not to an other / therof sholde come y^e^ descencyon ¶ varyaunce amonges you. Therfore to you al ¶ euery of you I commyt my sone to nourysshe and to teche. The maysters heryng this w^t^. grete thankȳges gyuynge to the Emperoure toke ¶ receyued his sone, and ladde hym towardes the courte of Rome. ¶ Upon the waye spake Craton to his felowes, If we this chylde sholde lerne within the Cyte of Rome there is so grete resorte ¶ concourse of people that it sholde hynder ¶ lette hym in his lernynge ¶ fantasyenge. I wote a fayre place withoute rome thre myle ryght pleasaunte ¶ delectable: there lete vs do make a. iiii square cha*m*ber of stone ¶ put hȳ therin ¶ vpō y^e^ walles of y^e^ syde lete vs paȳte ¶ wryte y^e^ .vii. artes lyberales, so y^t^ y^e^ chylde al times may se ¶ beholde therin his

doctrine as wel as in his boke ꝛ this aduyse ꝛ counseyll pleased theym all. and was done accordynge in euery poynte. The maysters dylygently euery daye durynge .vii. yere taught ꝛ lettred the chylde. whiche maysters determyned amonge themselfe and sayde / It is good y$^{t}$ we examen our dyscyple how he is spedde in connynge ꝛ scyence. They al accorded to the same. Tho sayd mayster Pancyllas / howe shall we proue hym. Craton sayde, Lete euery of vs as he slepeth put vnder euery corner of his bed an olyue leue, and than we shall knowe yf he perceyued or felte ony thynge or not, this done he wakynge gretely marueyllynge lyftynge vp his eyen towarde y$^{e}$ rofe of the chamber feruently. The maysters seynge y$^{t}$ sayd. Wherfore lyft ye vp your eyen so sharply. He answered it is no merueyll, for in my slepe I saw the vppermost parte of the chamber inclyned towarde the erthe, or vnder me it was lyfte vp. This hery*n*ge y$^{e}$ maysters sayd amonge themselfe, Yf this childe may lyue he shal be a man of grete connȳge ꝛ fame.

How the Emperour by the coũseyll of y^e^ grete pry*n*ces & lordes of his Empyre wedded an other wyfe.

The prynces and grete lordes of the Empyre in the meane tyme came to the Emperour & sayd, My lorde ye haue only but one sone, it is possyble y^t^ he myght happen to dye. And therfore it were profytable that ye sholde wedde an other wyfe to engendre and make mo chyldren to thentente that the Empyre of Rome be not lefte without heyre. Also ye are so myghty that yf it sholde happen you to gete many chyldren ye may promote & auaunce them all to grete dygnytees and lordshyppes. Therupon answerde themperour, It is your counseyll that I shall take an other wyfe, than seke me one y^t^ is gracyous / pure vyrgyne fayre and gentyll borne, & than shall I folowe your counseyll and aduyse. They went & sought and serched many kyngdomes and londes & at the laste they founde the kynges doughter of Castyle that ryght fayre was & beateuouse, & her they gaue the Emperour to wyf. She behad her so well that anone in her loue he was taken so sore that he forgate and put in oblyuyon all the heuynesse & sorowe of his herte that he had taken for y^e^ deth of his fyrste wyfe. And they lyued longe

togyder w$^{t}$out chyldren. And as Thempresse sawe y$^{t}$ she myght not cõceyue for she herde y$^{t}$ themperour had a sone w$^{t}$ seuen wyse maysters to lerne ϒt nourysshe to y$^{e}$ behouffe [and] p[ro]fyte of Thempyre, she thought in herself ϒt wysshed his deth. And from y$^{t}$ houre forth she ymagyned how she myght conspyre his deth. It hapned on a nyght as y$^{e}$ Emperour lay in his bed, he sayd to thempresse, My [most dear and best beloved wife, I shall now open to you the secrets of my heart, for under the sun there is no creature that I love so well as you and therefore trust in my love.

[Then said the fair Empress: if it be so as you say, I require of you, a little boon or petition. Desire what you will, said the Emperor and all that to me is possible, I shall fulfil, and give it to you. Then said the Empress, my dear Lord, you know I have no child yet by you conceived for which I am sore pensive and heave; but Fame that never conceals it self long to true joy, hath delivered this happy truth to me; that ye have one Son only the which is sent to the seven Wise Masters to be taught and governed, and him I hold and require for my own son: wherefore I beseech ye send for him that I may see him and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Hereupon answered the Emperor it is sixteen years past since I saw him, your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent the Emperor sent unto the seven wise Masters a Letter sealed with his secret Sign, that upon pain of death they should bring his son in the feast of Penticost following.

[How the seven Wise Masters after the sight of the Emperor's letter would first observe the course and divine for shewing of the Firmament, and Planets, whether it were good to obey his commandment or not.

[And when the Masters by the letter had understood the Emperors will in the night they went and beheld the stars in the Firmament, whether it would be expedient to bring the child to the Emperor or not? and they saw clearly in the stars, that if they should lead the child in that time assigned, at the first word he should speak he should die an evil death: wherefore they were all very sorry; and as they beheld another star, they saw, that if they delivered not the child at the day aforesaid, they should lose their heads. Then said one of them of two evils the least is to be chosen: it is better that all we die, than that the child should lose his life: therefore that we may save the childs life let us go to the Emperor. And as they were thus sorrowful, the child came down from his chamber, and seeing his Masters so heavy, he demanded the cause of their heaviness: whereunto they answered: Sir, we have received your Fathers Letters that upon pain of death, now this high

feast of Penticost we shall lead you to your countrey, whereupon we have beholden the firmament, wherein we clearly find, that if we (within the time prefixed) present you to your father, at the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth ye shall be to the most vilest death condemned. Then said the child, I must also behold the Firmament with the stars: and so he did; and found clear in a little star, that if he could abstain from speaking seven dayes, he should be preserved and save his life. And after he had seen this, he call'd his Masters and shewed them the star, and said Behold my dear Masters, I see perfectly in the star, that if I abstain myself seven daies, I shall save my life. Ye are now seven Masters, the wisest of all the world, it is an easie thing for you, every of you for me one day to answer and with your wise answer every of you his day, my life may save and keep; and in the eighth day I shall speak my self, and save my life and all you from peril. As the Masters did behold that certain star, they thought with themselves that the child had said truth, saying, Almighty God be thanked, that the wisdom and cunning of our Disciple exceedeth us all. Then said the first master Pantillus, Lord, I shall speak for you the first day, and save your life. And Lentulus, the second master said I shall for you the second day answer; and so consequently every of them promised to answer for himself his day; and this said, they cloathed the child in purple, leaped on horseback with a fair company and hasted with the child to the Emperor.

[How the Emperor rode to meet his son coming from study with Joy, Solemnity and Triumph.]

Whan themperour perceyued y^t^ his sone was comynge upon y^e^ waye, he rode with grete joye to mete hym. The maysters vnderstandyng the comynge of themperour sayd to the chylde, It is best that we departe, ⁊ in the meane whyle we maye prouyde how we may saue your lyfe. The chylde sayd it pleaseth me well that ye so doo, but haue mynde of me in tyme of my necessyte. As they that herde, they toke theyr leue and departed towardes y^e^ Cyte. The chylde came after accompanyed ryght honourably. And as he and his fader themperour were mette, for joye ⁊ gladnesse he toke hym about the necke ⁊ kyssed hym and sayd, My dere sone how is it with you/ is it (*sic*) longe sythen that I sawe you. He bowed downe his hede and answerd no thynge. The fader had grete wonder why that he spake not and thought in himselfe that his maysters had hym so enformed that he rydynge sholde not speke. And whan they were comen to the palays and were descended from theyr horses, The fader toke his sone by the honde ⁊ lad hym in to the hall and set hym next hym ⁊ behelde him and sayde, Say me how it

is with your maysters, ¶ how they haue enformed you, for now it is many yeres syth I saw you. He enclyned downe his hede ¶ gaue none answere. The fader sayd, wherfore speke ye not to me. And whan thempresse herde that themperours sone was comen she was ryght joyous and glad, ¶ sayd I wyl goo to se hym. She apparaylled her with ryche vesture ¶ atyre, ¶ toke with her two of her gentylwymen ¶ went there as y$^{e}$ emperour was syttȳge w$^{t}$ his sone she sette her downe by y$^{e}$ chylde. ¶ she sayd to themperour is this your sone y$^{t}$ hath ben nourysshed w$^{t}$ y$^{e}$ seuen wyse maysters. ¶ he sayd / it is my sone / but he speketh not. She sayd, Delyuer to me your sone, ¶ if euer he spake I shall do hym speke. Tho sayd themperour ryse ¶ go w$^{t}$ her. The sone dyde reuere*n*ce to y$^{e}$ fader, as thoughe he sayd I am redy too accōplysshe your wyll, ¶ went w$^{t}$ her.

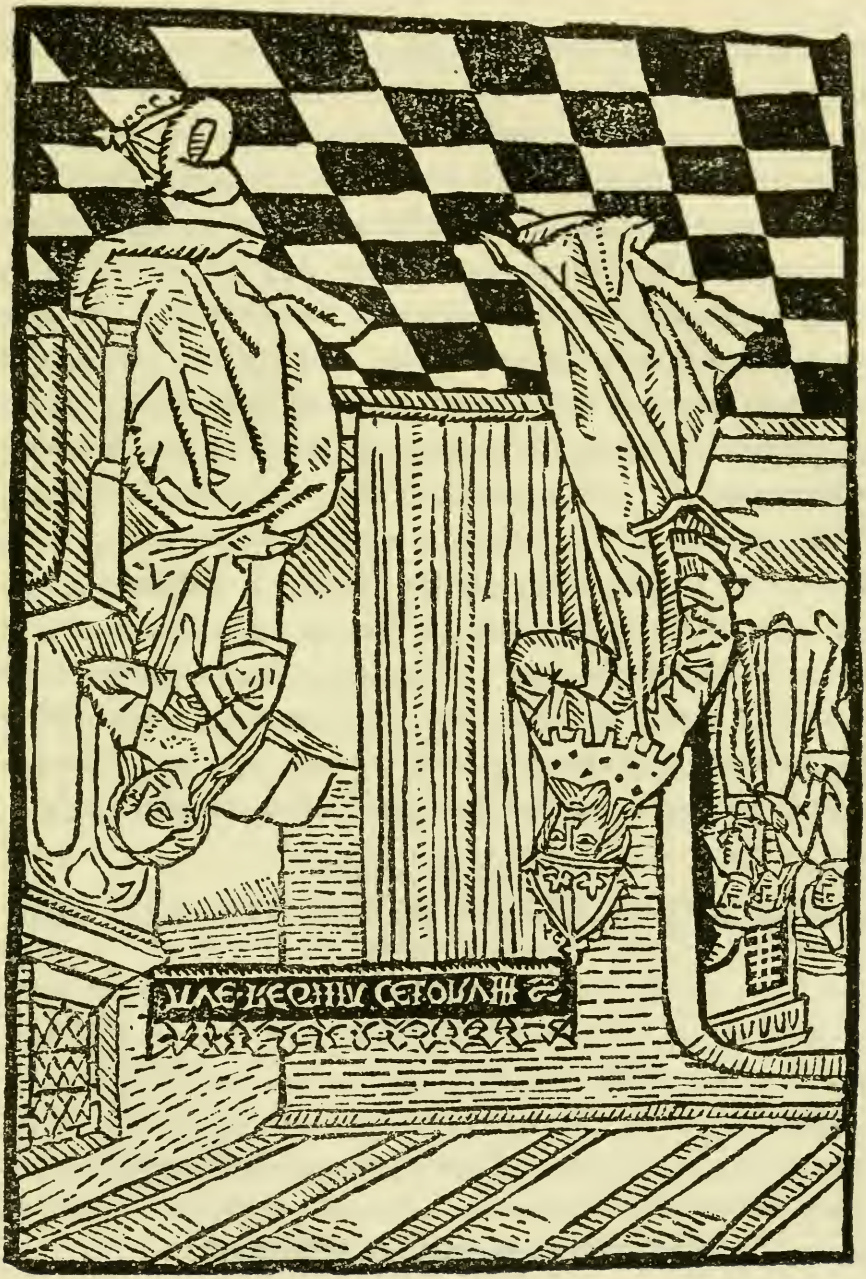
Howe thempresse ladde Dioclesyan themperours sone with her in her chamber for to make good chere w$^{t}$ hym the whiche he withstode.

Thempresse lad hym w$^{t}$ her in to her chamber ꝛ commaunded all other to auoyde ꝛ set hym by her afore her bedde, ꝛ sayd, O my best beloued dyoclesyan, I haue moche of your persone ꝛ beaute herde, but now I am glad y$^{t}$ I may se you w$^{t}$ myn$^{e}$ eyen that my herte coueyteth ꝛ loueth, for I haue caused your fader to sende for you / that I haue solace ꝛ joy of your persone. Wherfore I w$^{t}$out faute gyue you knowledge that I for your loue vnto this daye haue kepte my vyrgynyte. Speke to me ꝛ lete vs goo bed togyder. But he gaue her no worde to answer. She seynge that sayd to hym, O good dyoclesyan haue the half of my soule wherfore speke ye not to me / or at y$^{e}$ leest shewe me some token of loue / what shall I do, speke to me. I am redy to fulfyll and perfourme your wyll. ꝛ whan she had thus sayd she embraced hy*m* ꝛ wold haue kyssed hys mouth ꝛ he torned his vysage from her, ꝛ in no wyse wolde cōsent. Tho sayd she ayen to hy*m*, O sone

wherfore do ye thus wᵗ me: beholde there is none yᵗ may se vs lete vs togyder slepe / ꝛ than shall ye well p*er*ceyue yᵗ for your loue I haue kept my vyrgynyte, and he torned his vysage frome her/. She seynge yᵗ he was of her ashamed shewed vnto hym her naked body and brestes and sayde, beholde my sone what body I haue att your wylle, gyue me youre consent or elles it shall be herde for me to passe with my ryght mȳde. He neyther wᵗ sygne ne wᵗ countenaūce of vysage shewed her ony maner of loue, but as much as he coude *with*drewe hy*m* from her, whā she sawe yᵗ she sayd, O my moste swete sone yf it please you not to cōsent to me ne yet speke, haply for some resonable cause, Lo here is paper pen ꝛ ynke yf ye wyl not speke wᵗ your mouth than wryte your wyl yt I ony tyme herafter may trust in your loue or not. The chylde wrote as hereafter folowed, O lady god forbede yᵗ I sholde defoule my faders orcheyerde, yf I shulde defoul it: I wote not what fruyte I shold haue of it. I knowe wel one thȳge yᵗ I sholde synn̄ in yᵉ syghte of god ꝛ I sholde ren in yᵉ maledictyon of my fader, ꝛ therfore from hensforth prouoke or styre me no more therto / Whan she had yᵗ cedule seen ꝛ red she brake it wᵗ her teth: ꝛ tare or rent her clothes wᵗ her nayles to her nauyll. ꝛ her vysage al to scratched, it was al blody, ꝛ cast from her al yᵉ ornamētes of her hede ꝛ cryed wᵗ a loude voyce: come hither my lords ꝛ help me afore yᵗ ths rude ꝛ euyll body shame ꝛ rauyssh me.

Howe Thempresse complayned to themperour of the shame to her done by his sone.

The Emperour was in his halle and herde the crye ꝯ noyse of thempresse. he hastely ranne towardes his chambre ꝯ his knyghtes and other of his seruauntes folowed hym after for to see what there was to [be] done. Tho beganne thempresse to crye and to speke to themperour thus, O my lorde haue pyte and compassyon vpon me, beholde this yonge man is not your sone, but y^e^ foulest rybaude ꝯ harlot y^t^ euer was borne, ꝯ a defouler of wymmen, for as ye knowe wel I lad and brought hym with me in to my chamber, ꝯ sholde haue exhorted and caused hym to haue spokē. I haue done asmoche therto as I can or may. ꝯ whyles I with my wordes exhorted and meued hym for to haue spoken. he hath endeuoyred hymself with me to haue synned. ꝯ by cause I wolde not to hym consēte, but withstode as moche as I myght for to flee the shame, he my vysage had made all blody, ꝯ my vesture and ornamentes of my heed broken ꝯ all to torne, as ye may openly se: And yf ye had not so sone comen vnto my callynge / he had accomplysshed in me his mooste foule and worste wyll. whan them-



peroure this sawe and herd, fulfylled w$^{t}$ grete malyce ℈ woodnesse / commaunded his seruauntes that they sholde lede hym to the galowes ℈ hange hym. And after his lordes herde that sayde / Lorde ye haue no moo but this sone only. It is not good y$^{t}$ ye thus lyghtely putt hym to deth / the lawe is put and ordeyned for transgressours ℈ mysdoers, and yf it be so that he must edeye, lete hym by y$^{e}$ lawe dye leest that it be sayd y$^{t}$ themperour in his grete furour and Ire without lawe and Justyce he hath put his only sone to dethe. As themperour this herde commaunded him to be put in pryson vnto the tyme that iugement were gyuen ayenst hym. And whan thempresse vnderstode that the chylde was not put to dethe / she cryed ℈ weped bytterly ℈ wold haue no reste. whan the nyght was comen the Emperour entred in to his chamber to go to bed. and founde his wyfe wepynge ℈ sorowyng. To whome he sayde, O my mooste dere lady / for what cause are ye thus sorowfull. She answered, Knowe ye not how y$^{t}$ your cursed sone hath me thus moche shame done ℈ offended / and ye haue commaunded hym too be hanged and yet he lyued / ℈ your worde is not performed ne my shame is not wroken. Tomorowe sayde themperour he shall dye by y$^{e}$ lawe. Then sayd she, shalle he so longe lyue. Theñe myght it happen to you as it dyd vpon a burgeys of Rome of whome an example is sayd. The Emperoure sayd, I praye you shewe me that example. That shall I doo gladly sayd the Empresse.

## *The Fyrst Example of the Empresse.*

[In the city of Rome was a Burgess which had a fair Garden, wherein he had a noble Tree, the which every year brought forth fruit of good vertue for whosoever eat thereof that were sick of any manner of sickness or leprosie he should soon be whole and receive his sight It happened on a day, as the Burgess went into his garden to visit the Tree, he espied under the Tree a fair young Imp, and called to him the Gardiner and said: my friend, of this young Imp I give thee charge for I trust of that to plant a better Tree than this is. The Gardiner said: I shall it gladly do. Another time the Burgess came again into his garden to visit the young Plant, and it appeared unto him that it grew not so much as it should do, and he said to the Gardiner: how may this be and he said, it is no wonder, for this great Tree hath so great arms and branches, that the air may not come to the root of the young tree, then said the Burgess, cut and hew off the arms and the boughs, that the air may come thereto. The Gardiner did as he commanded. The

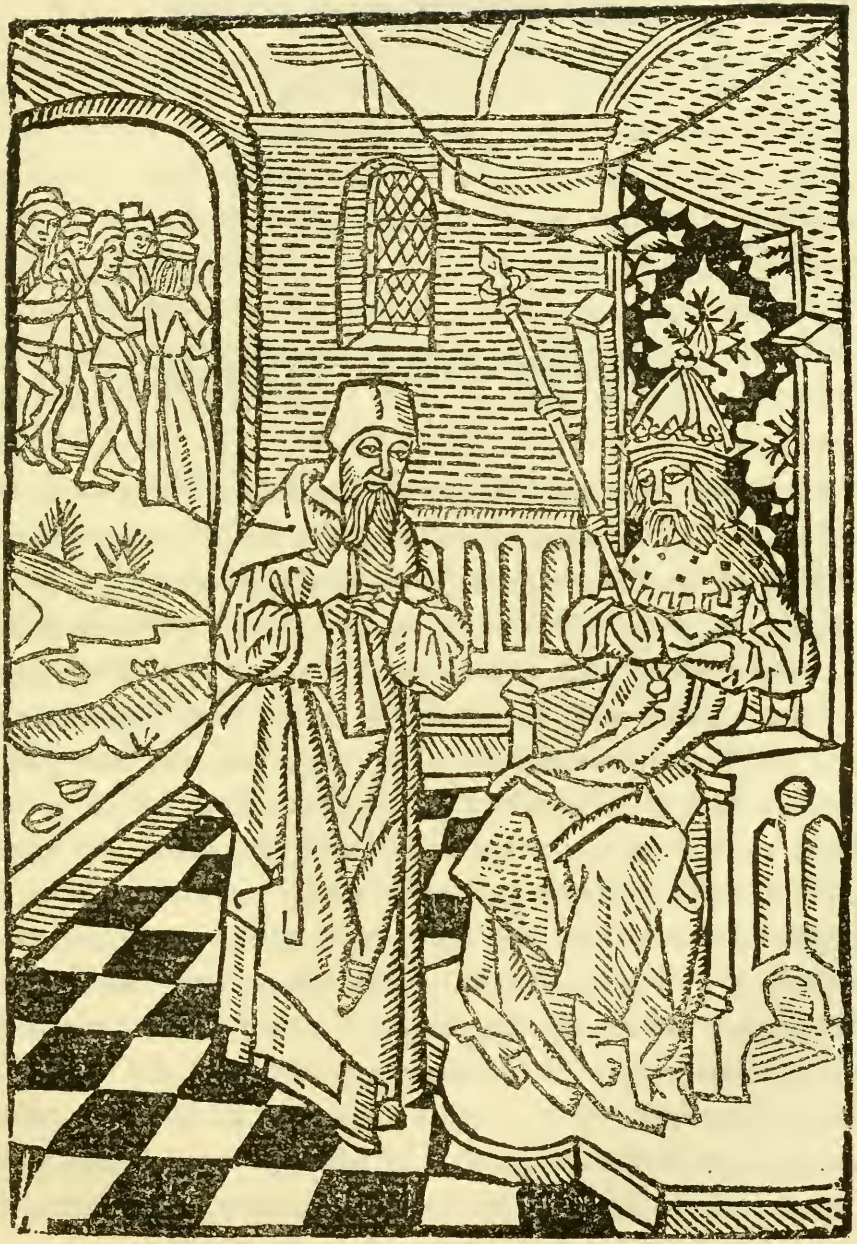
Burgess came again another time to see the young plant, and thought that it grew never the better and said to the Gardiner· what is it that letteth this plant not to grow now: and he said, I suppose the height of the Old Tree letteth the Sun, that the rain may not come thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master unto him, hew down that tree to the ground, for I hope of this Plant to have a better than ever] this was. The gardyner heryng his mayster obeyed hym, ꝛ hewe downe the tree. And as this was done y$^{t}$ yonge plant all holy perysshed and came to nought. wherof came grete harme, for whan y$^{e}$ poore ꝛ the seke people perceyued y$^{t}$ the tree was so destroyed they cursed all them that were of counseyll ꝛ helpers therto / by the whiche they all afore tyme were heled ꝛ cured of theyr infyrmytees ꝛ maladyes. Then sayd the Empresse vnderstande ye what I haue sayd. Yes ryghte well. Than sayd she, I shall declare to you what I haue sayde.

## *The Declaratyon of the Example.*

This tree mylorde betokeneth your moste noble persone / that with your counseyll and helpe many pore ꝛ seke folke are gretly holpen ꝛ conforted. And the yonge ympe that vnder the grete tre is vp growen is your cursed sone that now by his cunnynge begȳnith to growe and studyeth how he fyrste may the armes and bowes of your myght cutte of / and to wynne too hym the londe ꝛ praysynge of the people. and ouer y$^{t}$ he ymagyneth to destroy your person that he may hȳselfe reygne. But what shall fall than therof come, all poore and feble people shall curse all them the whiche myght haue destroyed your sone ꝛ haue not done it / I counseyll you whyles ye are in your power ꝛ helth y$^{t}$ ye destroye hym leste y$^{t}$ the curse of the people fall vpon you. Tho sayde the Emperour, ye haue gyuen me good counseyll. Tomorowe I shall condempne hym to the moost vylest deth that can be thought. Whan y$^{e}$ daye was come / y$^{e}$ Emperour went ꝛ sate in Jugemēte, ꝛ commaunded his seruauntes y$^{t}$ they sholde lede his sone to be hanged w$^{t}$ trompettes blowynge in to kenynge of deth. And as

themperours sone was lad throughe the Cyte, the comen people began too wepe ꝛ crye alas ye onely sone of themperour is lad towardes his deth / ꝛ therwithal came Pancyllas rydyng vpon a hors ye fyrste mayster. Whan the chylde sawe hym / he bowed his hede to hym, as though he had sayde, Haue mynde vpon me whan ye come afore my fader, se how I am lad towardes the galowes. Than ye mayster sayd to the seruauntes / make no haste, for I hope by the grace of god this day to delyuer hym frō the deth. Then sayde all the people, O good mayster haste you to ye palays and saue your dyscyple. he smote his hors with ye spores tyll he came to the palays ꝛ kneled before the Emperour ꝛ dyde hym reuerence / To whome themperour sayd, It shall neuer be to the good, which answerd I haue deserued a better rewarde. The Emperour sayd there lyest yu, for I delyuered to the ꝛ thy felowes my sone well spekynge / ꝛ in alle thyng well manered, ꝛ now he is dompe / ꝛ that wors is, he wolde haue oppressed my wyf, therfore this day he shall dye, ꝛ ye all shall dye a shameful dethe. The mayster sayd, O lord as for your sone yt ye saye that he speketh not, yt knoweth god, ꝛ without a cause it is not as ye shall vnderstande. And that ye saye more yt he your Empresse wolde haue befowled. I shall saye you of a trouth, he hath ben in our company by ye space of xvi yeres ꝛ we neuer coude perceyue suche thinges by hym. And therfore my dere lorde I shall shew you one thynge that yf ye put your sone to deth for ye wordes of your wyfe, it sholde happen too you wors than

to a knyght the whiche that kylled his best grey hounde thrugh the wordes of his wyfe whiche saued his sone from y$^{e}$ deth. Tho sayd themperour to y$^{e}$ mayster tell me y$^{t}$ example. The Mayster sayd, Lorde that shall I not do / for afore or I coude make an ende therof your sone myght be dede ꝛ thenne in vayne ꝛ without fruyte I sholde reherce it, but yf it please you this notable example to here / call ayen her sone tyll to morowe ꝛ as ye thynke by reason then do with hym youre pleasure. As themperour that herde anone he lete the chylde too be called ayen ꝛ in the meane tyme he sette hym in pryson whyles the mayster sholde fynisshe his tale. And then he beganne to saye in suche maner as folowith.



## *The Example of the Fyrste Mayster.*

There was a valyaunt knyght whiche had oonly one soone as ye haue. The whiche he loued so moche that he ordeyned for his kepynge thre nourysshes, the fyrste sholde gyue hym souke ꝛ fede hym, ye seconde sholde wasshe hym ꝛ kepe hym clene, ye thirde sholde brynge hym to slepe ꝛ to reste. This knyghte had also a greyhounde ꝛ a fawcon yt he also loued ryghte well. The greyhounde was so good yt he neuer ran too noo game but he toke it ꝛ helde it tyl his mayster came. And yf his mayster dysposed hym to go to batayle, yf he sholde not spede in ye batayll / anone as he sholde mounte vpon his horse ye greyhounde wold take the horse tayll in his mouth ꝛ drawe backwarde / ꝛ wolde also cry ꝛ howle meruaylously loude. By thise sygnes the knyght vnderstode yf that he sholde spede in his iourneye or not. The faucon was so gentyll and so hardy that he was neuer caste of to his praye but he toke it. This same knyght had grete plesure in iustynge ꝛ turneynge, so yt vpon a tyme vnder his castell he lete proclame a tornement to

the whiche came many good lordes and knyghtes. The knyght entred in to y^e^ tourney, ¶ his lady went with her maydens to se it. And as they went out after went the nourysshes ¶ lefte the chylde lyenge alone in the cradell in the halle where the greyhounde laye nygh the wall, and y^e^ hauke or faucon standynge vpon a perke. In this halle there was a serpente lurkynge or hydde in a hole. to all them of the castell vnknowen. The whiche whā he felte that they were all absent he put out his hede of his hole. ¶ as he noman sawe but the chylde lyenge in y^e^ cradell, he went out of his cauerne towardes y^e^ cradell for the chylde to haue slayne. The noble faucon seynge that, behelde y^e^ grehounde that was slepȳge / she made suche a noyse ¶ rustelynge with her winges or feders y^t^ the greyhounde awoke and rose vp. and whan he sawe the serpente nyghe the chylde anone ayenst hym he lepte / ¶ they bothe faught so long togyder tyll y^t^ the serpente hadde greuously hurted and wounded the greyhounde that he bled sore. soo y^t^ the erthe about the cradell was al be bled with the blode of the greyhounde. The greyhounde whan that he felte hymselfe so greuously hurted and wounded, sterte fyersly vpon the serpente, and faught sore togyder and so egerly, so that betwyne theym the cradell was ouer caste w^t^ the chylde the botome vpwarde. And by (*sic*) bycause y^t^ the cradell had foure pomelles or fete they saued the chyldes vysage ¶ his lyfe frome ony hurtȳge fallynge towardes the erthe. ¶ what shall I say more. Incontynent therafter with grete payne the greyhounde ouercame ¶

slewe the serpente / ꝛ went ꝛ layd hym downe ayen in his place ꝛ lycked his woundes / and anone after as ye iustes ꝛ torneye was done, the nourysshes were the fyrste that came in to ye castell / ꝛ as they sawe the cradell reuersed with bloode vppon the erthe enuyronned, and that the greyhounde was also blody, they thought and sayde amonges themselfe that the greyhounde hadde slayne the chylde, and they were not soo wyse as too tourne vppe ayen the cradell with the chylde for too haue seene what was therof befallen. But they sayd / lete vs fle or ren away leest that oure mayster put or laye the blame vpon vs and slee vs. And as they were thus away rennynge / they met wt the knyghtes wyfe, and she sayd to them Wherfore make ye this sorowe ꝛ whether wyl ye ren, ꝛ they sayde, O lady woo and sorowe be to vs and to you; why what is there happened, shewe me. The grehounde they sayd that our lorde ꝛ mayster loueth soo moche hath deuoured and slayne your sone / ꝛ lyeth by the wall all full of the bloode. As ye lady this herde she fell to the erthe and began to wepe and crye pyteously: ꝛ sayd alas, O my dere sone be ye thus slayne ꝛ dede, what shall I nowe make that I haue my onely sone thus loste. Herwithall came in the knyght frome the torneye, ꝛ beholdyng his lady thus cryenge ꝛ makyng sorowe. he demaũded her wherfore that she made so grete sorowe and lamentacyon. She answered hym, O my lorde youre greyhounde that ye loue soo moche hath slayne your onely sone, ꝛ lyeth by the wal sacyate with bloode of the chylde. The knyght hugely angred went in to

the hall, ꝛ the greyhounde went to hym to mete and to fawne as he was wonte to doo. And the knyght drewe out his swerde ꝛ with one stroke smote of the houndes heede, and went to ye cradell and founde his sone al hole, and by the cradell the serpente slayne. And by dyuers sygnes perceyued that the hounde hadde foughten ayenst the serpent for the saluacyon of yᵉ chylde. Then with grete sorowe ꝛ wepyng he tare his here and sayd woo be to me that for the wordes of my wyfe I haue slayne my good greyhounde yᵉ whiche hath saued my chyldes lyfe ꝛ hath slayne the serpente. Herfore I wyll put my selfe to penaunce ꝛ brake his swerde in thre peces, and went towardes yᵉ holy londe, ꝛ abode there all the dayes of his lyfe. Then sayd yᵉ mayster to themperour, Lorde vnderstande ye what I haue sayd. And he answerd and sayde ryght well. The mayster sayd: Yf yᵗ ye do youre sone to dethe for yᵉ wordes of your wyfe, it shall come to you wors than it dyde too the knyght for his greyhounde. The Emperour sayde ye haue shewed me a fayre example, ꝛ wᵗout doute this daye shall not my sone dye. Tho sayd the mayster yf ye do so ye do wysly, but I thanke you that ye haue hym spared this daye for my sake:

## *The Seconde Complaynte of the Empresse.*

Whan y$^{t}$ thempresse herde y$^{t}$ the chylde was not yet deede, she began to wepe bytterly ꝛ sate her downe vpon the erthe in ye asshes ꝛ wolde not holde vppe her heed. As themperour that herde he entred in to y$^{e}$ chāber ꝛ sayd to her, O good wyfe wherfore make ye all this sorowe ꝛ trouble your selfe so moche. She sayd demaunde ye me that knowe ye not well what grete despyte ꝛ shame y$^{t}$ I haue suffred of your vnhappy sone, ꝛ haue p*ro*mysed me y$^{t}$ ye shold se iustyse ouer hȳ done ꝛ yet he lyueth, of trouth it shall hapne too you as it happened vpon a shepeherde and a boore. The emperour sayd, I praye you shewe me that exāple for my lernynge. and she sayd yesterday I shewed one: and I sawe none effecte that therof came, too what entente sholde I now shewe. Neuertheles I shal this notable example telle ꝛ declare vnto you / in this maner hereafter folowynge.

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## *The Seconde Example of the Empresse.*

There was somtyme an Emperour the whiche had a grete foreste / wherin was a bore y$^{t}$ was so cruell ꝯ so fell that all men goynge through the forest he kylled and deuoured. The emperour was therof ryght heuy, and lete to proclame thrugh all his empyre, that who soeuer he was that coude sle the bore sholde haue his oonly doughter too wyfe, ꝯ therto his Empyre after his deth. ꝯ as this in all places proclamed was there was not one man founde y$^{t}$ durste medle or intromytte. Than was there a shepeherde whyche in hymself thought, myght I this bore sle ꝯ wyn̄e I sholde not only auaunce my self, but also al my generatyon ꝯ kynred. he toke his shepeherdes staf in his honde, and went in to the forest. And as the boore had of hym a syght, he drew hym towardes the herdman, and he for fere clymmed vpon a tree. Than the bore began to byte and gnawe the tree / so that the herde thought shortely that he sholde haue ouer throwe it. This tre was laden w$^{t}$ grete plente of fruyte. The herde gadred and plucked therof

and cast them to y^e^ boore. In so moche that whan he had fylled hym therwith he put and layde hym downe to slepe. The whiche perceyuynge the herde by lytell ℈ lytell he descended ℈ with the one hande he clawed the bore, ℈ with y^e^ other he helde hymselfe on the tre / ℈ seynge y^t^ the boore slepte soundly ℈ faste, drewe out his knyfe and smote y^e^ bore to y^e^ herte ℈ kylled hȳ. ℈ wedded thēperours dought^r^ to hys wyf: ℈ aft^r^ y^e^ deth of her fad^r^ he was made emperour. tho sayd she my lorde wote ye not what I haue sayd. He sayd ryght well. Then sayd she, this myghty bore betokeneth your mooste noble persone / ayenst whome maye no man withstande neyther by wysdom ne with strength. This shepherde with hys staffe is the persone of your vngracyous sone, which w^t^ his staff of connȳge begynneth to play w^t^ you as ye herdman clawed the bore and made him to slepe ℈ after kylled hym. In y^e^ same maner y^e^ maysters of your sone by theyr fals fables and narracyons clawe ℈ glose vnto the tyme that your sone slee you, that he may regne. Tho sayd themperour god forbede y^t^ they sholde doo too me as they dyde to y^e^ bore. ℈ sayd vnto her this day my sone shall be hanged. And she answered yf ye do so ye do wysely. Than themperour y^e^ seconde tyme syttȳge in iugement, cōmaunded to lede hys [son] to y^e^ galowes ℈ hange hym. And whyles he was goȳge, the seconde mayster came before themperour doynge hym reuerence as it is before shewed in y^e^ comȳge of the fyrste mayster. To whom y^e^ seconde mayster sayd O my lorde themperour yf ye sholde do sle your sone for

the wordes of your wyfe, it myghte worst come to you than it dyde to a knyght which for the wordes of his wyfe was vniustly put in a pyller. Themperoure sayd, O good mayster tell me how it hapned. And he sayde my lorde I shall not saye it but yf y$^{t}$ ye will doo call ayen your sone from y$^{e}$ deth vnto the tyme y$^{t}$ thexample be tolde, the whiche yf it tourne you not frome your purpose, your wyll be fulfylled. The emperour cōmaūded y$^{t}$ y$^{e}$ chylde sholde be called ayen. And [after this manner following, the second master began to tell.

## [*The Example of the Second Master.*

[In a City was an ancient Knight, which wedded a young wife and fair, as ye hath done, whom he loved above all earthly things; the knight was a very circumspect and careful husband insomuch that every night he locked the door with his own hands and laid the keys under his Bedshead. In that City was a law or custom, that at a certain hour in the night, a bell was used to be rung, that after the ringing of the said bell, if any man or woman were by the watch-men found about the streets, all that night they should be kept in prison, and on the morrow set upon the Pillory, that all people might behold them.

[The said Knight had little lust of fleshly deeds, for he was very old, and might not satiate or perform the desires and appetites of his young wife; wherefore every night she having a Paramour, her Husband sleeping, took the keys from under his Beds-head, and went to her love; and when she came again, laid the keys under her husband's head; and thus they played many a time.

[It happened upon a night that the knight awaked from his sleep, and missed his wife, and the keys and his Beds-head, whereupon he rose up and went unto the doors, and found them open, the which he bolted fast within, and went up again into his chamber, and looked out of the window towards the street: and when it was near the third cocks crow, his wife came from her best beloved, and found the door shut and bolted within: then was she] sorowfull. neuerthelesse she knocked to haue come in. Tho spake the knyght out of the wyndowe. O y$^{u}$ moste euyll ℈ vnclene wyfe, now I knowe ℈ am experte that many a tyme ye haue forsaken my bedde ℈ gone and done auoutrye. now shall ye stande tyll the bel be rongen and y$^{t}$ the wakers may take you and doo with you according to the lawe. The wyfe answered, My lorde wherfore lay ye that to me. In trouth I shall saye you I was called by my moders mayden ℈ fetched in the nyght, ℈ whan I sawe that ye slepte so swetely I durste not awake you bycause that ye are olde, and therfore I toke y$^{e}$ keyes ℈ went to my moder the whyche is sore seke, that I fere too morowe she must bee anoynted or aneeled notwithstandyng for that I sholde not you offende or dysplease I haue hasted me ayen to you ℈ haue lefte her lyenge in grete payne ℈ infyrmyte. Therfore I pray you for the loue of god lete me in afore the bel be rongen. The knyght answered So shall ye not come in, ye muste there abyde vnto the tyme that the bell be rongen, ℈ tyll that y$^{e}$ wakers come and take you. The she sayde that sholde be to you ℈ to me: to all our

frendes ꝛ kynred a grete shame and rebuke. Therfore atte the reuerence of almyghty god lete me come in. Than sayd he, Haue in thy mȳde euil and false wyfe how oftentymes ye haue forsaken my bedde and doone auoutrye. It is moche better that ye suffer shame and beewayle for youre synnes here in this worlde, thanne for too suffer payne in helle. She sayd ayen to hȳ I praye you for the loue of hȳ y$^{t}$ was crucyfyed ꝛ dyed vpon the crosse haue mercy vpon me. The knyght answered, ye laboure all in vayñ for ye shall not come in, but ye shall tary the comynge the wakers. As she herde that, she sayde my lorde ye knowe well that by this dore standyth a well, yf ye lete me not come in I shall therin drowne my selfe, rather thanne all my frendes sholde be shamed for me. Theñe sayd he, wolde god y$^{t}$ ye had be drowned long afore or ye in my bedde came. And as they thus spake togyder, y$^{e}$ mone went down ꝛ was al derke. Tho sayde she, yf it wyll none otherwyse be I shal drowne miselfe, but yet afore as a trewe crysten woman I wylle make my testament. Fyrst I bequethe to god ꝛ to oure lady my soule, my body too be buryed in y$^{e}$ chyrche of saynt Peter ꝛ of all other thȳges ꝛ goodes y$^{t}$ god hath sent me, I gyue vnto you to dyspose for my soule after your wysdome ꝛ dys-crecyon, ꝛ whan she had thus sayd, she went to the well, ꝛ a grete stone ther beynge w$^{t}$ bothe her armes she lyfte vp ꝛ sayd, Nowe I drowne myselfe, ꝛ caste y$^{e}$ stone downe in to the well ꝛ went ayen pryuely and stode by the dore. The knyghte herynge that noyse cryed w$^{t}$ a lowde voyce saynge / alas alas

my wyfe is drowned, and hastely came downe and rāne to the well. And whan she sawe that the dore was open, anone she entred and locked and made faste y^e^ yate / ϒ went vp to y^e^ chamber ϒ laye ϒ loked out of y^e^ wyndowe. The knyghte stode by y^e^ welle ϒ cryed and wepte bytterly and sayd, woo be to me I haue now loste my moost beloued wyfe, cursed be the tyme that I made faste the dore ayenst her. The lady herde that ϒ sayd, O ye cursed olde grysarde, why stade ye there this tyme on y^e^ nyght, was not my body to you suffycyent, wherfore goo ye thus euery nyghte, out to your harlottes ϒ hores and leue my bed. As he herde the voyce of his wyfe he was ryght gladde and sayd Blessed be god that yet she is not drowned. But my good lady wherfore laye ye suche thynges ayenst me. I thoughte to haue chastysed you, and therfore I locked the dore. But in no wyse I entended your peryl / ye knowe well whatte sorowe I made for you whan I herde you to haue fallen in the well, ϒ therfore I came lyghtly to haue holpen you. Therupon she sayde, falsly ye lye. I neuer dyde suche thinges as ye laye to me. But it appereth by a comyn prouerbe, he y^t^ is defectyfe or culpable hymself in a synne, he iugeth euery man to be in the same, or elles y^t^ fader soughte neuer his sone in y^e^ ouen: but yf he had ben therin hȳselfe. And therfore ye put that to me y^t^ ye yourselfe haue oftentymes done ϒ vsed but one thynge I promys you. ye shall abyde there tyll y^e^ wakers come, ϒ that y^e^ bell be rongen that they may lede you before y^e^ iuges to abyde ϒ suffer the law. Tho

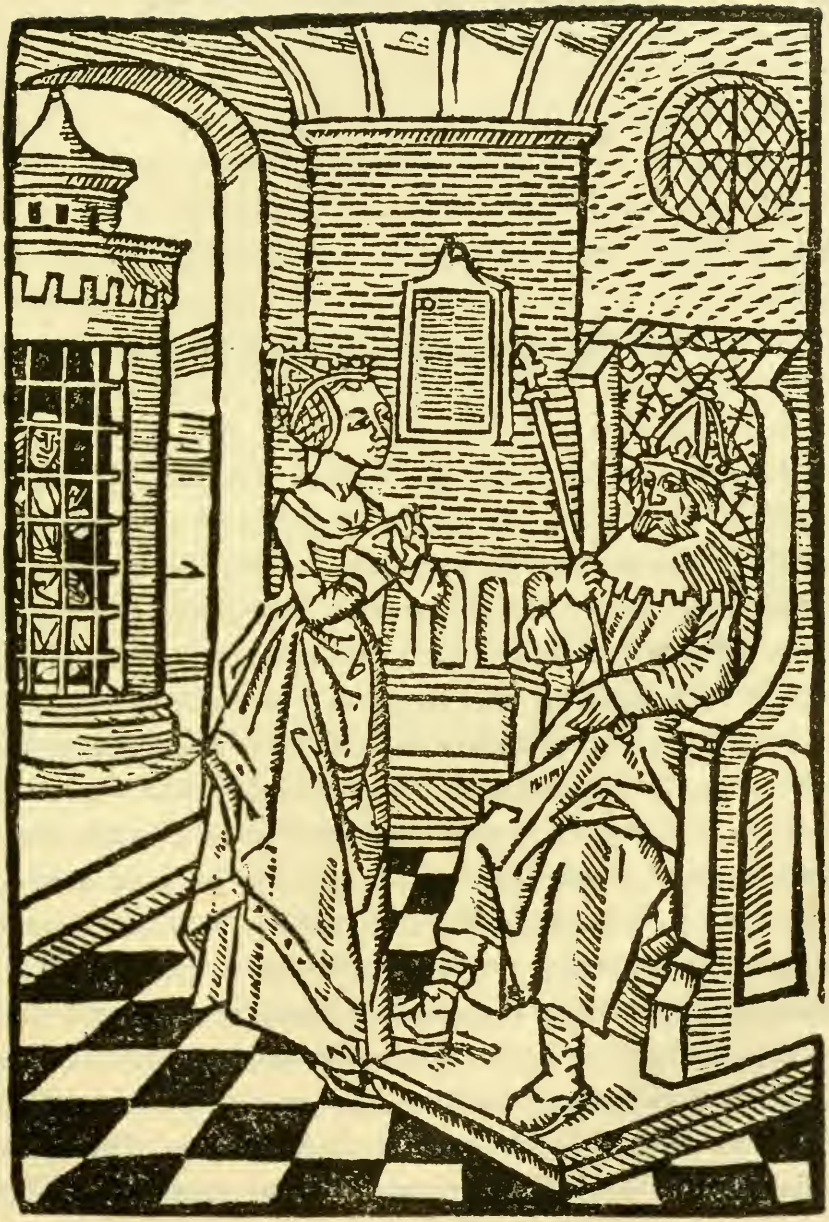
sayd the knyght, wherfore laye ye suche thynges too me / I am olde ꝛ all my lyfe dayes I haue ben conuersaunt in this cyte, ꝛ in this was I neuer dyffamed, ꝛ therfore lete me in that to me ne to your self ye do no shame. She sayd, ye speke in vayne, It is better that ye forthynke your sȳnes in this worlde than in hell. Haue in mynde what the wyse man sayth. A poore man proude, A ryche man a lyer, An olde man a fole god hatyth. So ye be a lyer and ryche. what nede was it too you for too lye vpon me. And ye are a fole, for ye had y^e^ floure of my youth at your pleasure, and yet ye muste renne to hoores ꝛ harlottes. And therfore it is a grete grace of god that ye haue tyme and space too forthynke it, leste that ye sholde perysshe and be dampned for eurmore. ꝛ for y^t^ suffre your penaunce pacyently. Tho knyght sayd, O my best and well beloued lady all though it be so, yet is god mercyfull, and he asketh noo thynge of a synner, but he amende his lyfe and forthynke and doo penaunce for his synnes. Nowe lete me come in and I wyll make amendes, She sayde, Whiche deuyll hath made you so good a prechour, So come ye not in. And as they thus spake the bell was rongen / y^e^ knyght herynge that sayd, O my mooste dere lady the bell ryngeth now, suffer me to come in that I be not ashamed for euer. whiche answered, y^e^ ryngȳge of the bell pretendeth the helthe of youre soule take it pacyently in your penaūce. And as this was sayd come y^e^ wakers y^t^ aboute the cyte went ꝛ founde the knyght standynge in y^e^ strete ꝛ sayd to hy*m*, O good man it is not gode y^t^ ye

in this houre of ye nyght stande here. And as she herde the voyce of ye wakers / she sayd, Good felowes venge me on yt olde cursed horehunter ⁊ rybaude, for ye knowe whose doughter and what I am. This cursed olde man is wont euery nyght to leue my bed, ⁊ gothe to his hoores ⁊ harlottes. I haue longe forborne hym and wolde not shewe it ne complayne vpon hym too my frendes, for I trusted that he wolde haue amẽded his mysrule, ⁊ it helpeth not. And therfore take hym ⁊ punysshe hym after the lawe, yt all suche olde dotardes may take example by hym. Then ye wakers toke hym and all nyght chastysed hym in pryson. ⁊ on ye morne they put hym on ye pyllery. Tho sayd to the Emperoure, Lorde haue ye ynderstonde what I haue sayd ⁊ he sayd ryght well. Tho sayd ye mayster, yf ye put to dethe your sone by ye excytacyon of your wyfe, it shall to you worse come than it dyd to ye knyght. The Emperour sayd she was the worste woman yt euer I herde of that so falsely her husbande brought to shame ⁊ rebuke. I say to you mayster yt for ye reason of this example, my sone shall this daye not dye. The mayster sayd to hym, yf ye do so than do ye wysely. And yt herafter ye shall ioye, ⁊ I commende you to god / ⁊ thanke you of your pacyent herynge / and of the sparynge of your sone and so he departed.

## *The Thyrd Complaynte of the Empresse.*

Whan thempresse herde y$^{t}$ the chylde was not dede she wepte bytterly ¶ entred in to her preuy chamber / ¶ tare her skyn w$^{t}$ her nayles, ¶ w$^{t}$ loude voyce cryed and sayd alas y$^{t}$ euer I was borne, ¶ y$^{t}$ I soo grete a kynges doughter sholde thus be intreated ¶ shamed and therof can haue no remedy. Her gētilwȳmen th*is* herȳg wēt ¶ shewed it to thēperour. ¶ he went vnto her ¶ co*m*forted her say*in*g O lady wepe not so ne cry not, for it becometh you no thynge / whiche sayd / the loue that I haue ¶ owe to you maketh me more to sorowe than the contempte of the dede. for why the inwarde loue of your herte hath hytherto prohybite ¶ letted me y$^{t}$ I haue not retorned ayen in to my countree to my fader but I fere yf I sholde so do to you it myght do harme for he is myghty to honoure me w$^{t}$ rychesses, and too venge my quarell ¶ despyte in such wyse y$^{t}$ yė ¶ youres myght forthynke it Therto sayd themperour lete that goo out of your mynde, shewe it not / for as long as I lyue

I shall neuer fayle you. And she sayd / lorde I praye god that ye maye longe lyue. But I fere me y$^{t}$ it shall hapen vpon you as it dyde of a knyght and of his sone that wolde not burye his faders hede in the chyrcheyerde, a*n*d yet his fader was for hym slayne / . Than sayd themperour Shewe me y$^{t}$ example, how that was that he wolde not burye his faders heede / she sayd I shall do it to your proufyte.



## *The Thyrde Example of the Empresse.*

There was in the cyte of rome a knyghte y$^{t}$ had two doughters ℞ one sone. this knyghte hadde so grete delyte in hauntinge iustynge and turneynge that all thynge that he myght wynne ℞ gete he layde it and spente it therupon. In that tyme was an emperour named Octauyan, whiche in rychesse of golde ℞ syluer exceded al other kynges and prynces in so moche that he had a toure full of golde, and ordeyned a knyght to haue y$^{e}$ kepynge ℞ charge therof. This knyghte that so haunted iustynge ℞ other ydell games came to so grete pouerte that he was dysposed to sel his herytage, ℞ called to hym his sone and sayd. My sone it behoueth me of your counseyll, for necessyte and pouerte compelleth me to sell myn herytage, or elles for to fynde an other way by the whiche I maye lyue, for yf I sholde sell myn heritage ye ℞ your systers sholde perysshe. The sone sayde, fader yf ye can fynde ony other meane without sellynge of the herytage, I sholde be redy to helpe you. To whome y$^{e}$ fader sayd I am bethought vpon a good counseyll. Them-

perour hath a toure full of golde / by nyght tyme lete vs go thyder with instrumentes and dygge and hewe through the toure, and lete vs take of the golde as moche as shal suffyse us. Therto answered the sone ℈ sayd, that coũseyl can not be amended, for it is better of themperoures golde to take to helpe vs than our herytage to sell. They rose vp bothe in a nyght and went to the toure and with instrumentes they made there thrugh an hole, and toke as moche golde as they bothe coude cary away at that tyme. The knyght payed his dettes ℈ haunted ayen iustes as he dyde before tyll all was spẽte and consumed. In the meane whyle the keper of y$^{e}$ tresoure went in to the toure ℈ whan he saw the tresoure stolen, ℈ a grete hole made through the wall, he began to waxe sore aferde ℈ went to themperour and shewed how it was befallen. To whome themperour sayd all angrely, what nedest y$^{u}$ to shewe that haue I not delyuered to the my tresoure / ℈ therfore of the I wyll aske it. Tho anone as the keper herde that went to the toure ayen, ℈ set afore the hole a grete vessel ful of pytche medled with other gummes so subtely, that noo man myght come in at that hole but that he must nedes fall into that vessell, ℈ yf he therin fyll he coude no more come out of it. Not longe after the knyghte had all the golde consumed and spent ℈ went ayen with his sone to the toure to stele more golde. And as the fader went in fyrste, anone he was fallen in y$^{e}$ ves*sel* with pytche to the necke. ℈ whan he saw that he was taken and coude not gete out he sayd to his sone, folow me

not, for yf thou doost thou may not escape to be taken. Than y^e^ sone sayd, god defende it y^t^ I sholde not helpe you: for yf ye are founden we are all but dede, ¶ yf that ye may not be holpen by me, I shall seke counseyll how that ye may be delyuered ¶ holpen. The fader sayd / there is none other counseyll, but with thy swerde smyte of myne heed / and as my body is founde without hede, noo man shall knowe me. ¶ so y^u^ and my doughters may escape ¶ auoyde this wordly shame ¶ dethe. The sone sayde, Fader ye haue gyuen y^e^ best counseyll, For yf it were so that ony man myght perceyue ony knolege of you, none of vs sholde escape y^e^ deth ¶ therfore it is expedient that your hede be smyten of. Anone he drewe out his swerde ¶ smote of his faders hede ¶ caste it into a pytte. ¶ afterwarde hyd it therin and yede and shewed to his systers all the mater, whiche many dayes after pryuely bewayled the dethe of theyr fader. After this y^e^ keper of y^e^ tresour came in to the toure ¶ founde a body w^t^out ony hede. whereof he wondred sore, and shewed it to y^e^ emperour To whome he sayde, bynde that body at the tayle of an horse ¶ so drawe it by al the stretes of the cyte, ¶ dyligently take good hede yf ye here ony crye or wepynge. wheresoo euer ye here that he is lorde of the house. take all them ¶ w^t^ the body drawe them to the galowes ¶ hange them The whiche themperours seruauntes fulfylled accordinge to his cōmaūdemēt. And as they came ayenst the house of the dede knyght, ¶ as the doughters sawe body of theyre dede fader, they made a merueylous grete shryche

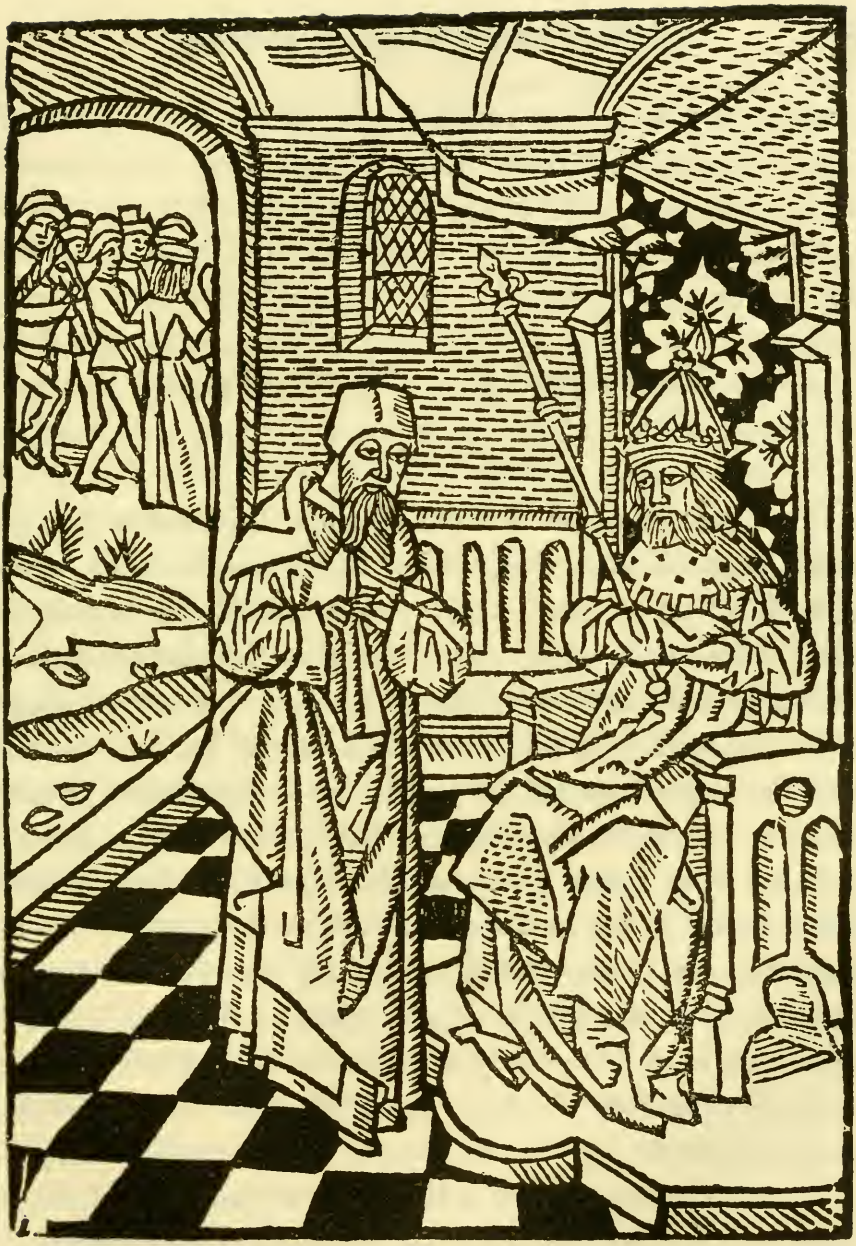
ꝛ wept pyteously ꝛ as ther broder that herd, anone he wounded hymself greuously in the mouthe with a knyfe, so that grete plente of bloode came oute of the wounde. The offycers whan the herde that noyse ꝛ crye entred in to the house, and demaunded the cause of theyr noyse ꝛ clamour. Tho answered the sone that I am thus wounded, for whan my systers sawe my bloode so habundauntly go oute as ye see, they began to wepe and crye. And whan the offycers sawe the wounde they byleued his wordes, ꝛ so dysceyued went theyr wayes, and hynge (*sic*) the body of the knyght vpon the galowes where it hynge long tyme ꝛ his sone wolde neyther take his body downe frome the galowes, ne yet bury his hede. y^e^ Empresse sayd vnderstande ye what I haue sayd. Themperour sayd ye ryght well.

## *The Declaratyon of the Example.*

Tho spake thempresse, thus my lorde I fere me it shalbe of you ꝛ of your sone. This knyght for loue of his sone was made poore. ꝛ fyrste he commytted thefte ꝛ brake the toure, secondary dyde hymself too be heded, that his chyldren sholde haue no shame. After y^e^ sone cast his hede in a dyke, ꝛ buryed it nether in chyrche nor in chyrcheyerde, his body he suffred to hange styll vpon the galowes, yf that he coude not haue taken it downe in the daye he myght wel haue done in y^e^ nyght. In the same maner ye laboure nyght and day that ye maye promote your sone to honoure ꝛ ryches. But without doubte he dayly laboureth for your confusyon ꝛ destructyon that he may regne after you in your empyre. Therfore I aduyse you y^t^ ye do hȳ to be hanged before or he you destroye. Themperour sayd ye haue shewed me a good example. The knyghtes sone whan he had smyten of his faders hede wolde not bury it. Without doute my [son] fader (*sic*) shall not do so by me, but he communded (*sic*) anone his offycers that they sholde lede hym

to the galowes. ¶ they obeyed his cōmaūdement hastely. ¶ as they lad hym thrugh the stretes y^e people made grete noyse ¶ lamentacyon. alas alas the onely sone of the emperour is lad ayen towardes y^e galowes / ¶ as they thus ladde hym the thyrde mayster named Craton came rydȳg vpon an hors / ¶ as y^e chylde sawe hym he bowed downe his hede to hym as though he had sayd, haue mynde vpon me. The pepole cryed saying, O good mayster hast you ¶ saue youre dyscyple. He smote his horse w^t spores ¶ haysted him to y^e palays. And whan he came before themperoure he honourably salued hym, whiche sayd, thy comyng hyther shall neuer auayll the / nor it that y^u comest for. The mayster sayd, I hoped in my comynge to haue be welcome ¶ haue had a better rewarde ¶ not too haue be rebuked. The emperour sayd / as ye haue deserued so shal it be to you. To whom he sayd, my lord what haue I deserued. Themperour sayde, ye haue ryghte well deserued deth, for why I delyuered to you my sone well spekynge ¶ wel manered for to enfourme and teche, ¶ ye haue delyuered hym ayen too me dompe ¶ a rybaude. To whom the mayster sayd / in that ye say he is dompe y^t I commytte to god / for he maketh the dompe to speke ¶ the defe to here. But in that ye saye y^t he wolde haue your wyfe enforced that wolde I gladly knowe yf ony creature haue y^t seen, for there is no malyce aboue y^e malyce of a woman / and that shall I proue by a good example that wȳmen are full of lesȳges ¶ decepcōns, ¶ yf ye put to deth your sone for the wordes of your wyfe / it shall happen to you

as it dyd to a noble man of his wyfe ꝛ of his pye, the whiche he loued merueylously. To whome themperour sayd, you tell me how that wymmen are full of malyce ꝛ lesynges / whiche sayd I wyll not do it / but yf ye fyrst calle ayen your sone frome the dethe, ꝛ then at youre pleasure I shall shewe thexample. Than themperour anone made the chylde too be called ayen and put in pryson. Than the mayster began to say this example in this fourme folowynge.



## *The Example of the Thyrde Mayster.*

There was in a cyte a ryche burgeys that had a pye the which he loued so moche y$^{t}$ euery day he taught her to speke latyn ⁊ hebrewe. And whan y$^{t}$ she had lerned perfetly to speke those two langages / all y$^{t}$ she sawe ⁊ herde, she shewed ⁊ tolde to her mayster. This good man had a fayre yonge wyfe as ye haue / the whiche he loued moche. but she contrary loued not hym / bycause he myght not furnysshe her of such pleasures ⁊ lustes as she desyred to haue. And therfore had she an other fayre yonge man that she loued aboue her husbōde. And alwayes as her husbonde was out of the towne about his marchaundyse ⁊ other besynesses to do, and she sent for her best beloued y$^{t}$ they myght togyder make good chere. The pye as she that sawe tolde it to her mayster, at his home comyng, in such wyse that y$^{e}$ noyse ranne all ouer the cyte of her aduoutry, wherof her husbōde many tyme brauled ⁊ chydde her. She answered hȳ, ye beleue your cursed pye, whiche as longe as she lyueth shall alwayes make betwix us varyaunce ⁊

dyscorde. And he sayd the pye can not lye, for that she seeth ⁊ hereth that she telleth me, and therfore I beleue her more than you. It fortuned that the good man went in to ferre coũtrees to do his marchaũdyse, ⁊ as sone as was gone his wyfe sent for her frende ⁊ loue to solace ⁊ make good chere w$^{t}$ hȳ. but he durst not come by day lyght. but abode to y$^{e}$ euenynge leste that he sholde be seen ⁊ marked of y$^{e}$ peple. And as y$^{e}$ nyght was comen / he knocked at y$^{e}$ gate : ⁊ she was redy ⁊ opened it ⁊ sayd, Go in frely for ño man shall see you. ⁊ he sayd I fere me y$^{t}$ the cursed pye shall accuse vs, for by her is comen grete sclaundre vpon vs through out all the cyte. Entre in she sayd boldely and fere not. And as he sholde passe through y$^{e}$ halle where the pye was in her cage, she herd hym say thyse wordes. O my moste beloued I fere me gretely of y$^{e}$ pye that she shal bewraye vs. And as the wyfe herde that she sayde, Be styll foole. it is derke she may not se you. Theñe y$^{e}$ py that herynge sayde, If I se the not I here thy voyce, ⁊ thou doost wrcng to my mayster, for y$^{u}$ slepest with my maystresse, and whañe my mayster cometh I shall tell hym. The yonge man herynge that sayd, Tolde I not you y$^{t}$ the pye sholde dyscouer vs. And y$^{e}$ wyfe sayd fere not for this nyght we shall be auenged vpon the pye. And entred in to y$^{e}$ chamber ⁊ slepte togyder that nyght. About mydnyghte the wyfe arose, ⁊ called to her a mayden and sayde / fetche me a ladder ⁊ set vp too y$^{e}$ rofe of y$^{e}$ house y$^{t}$ I may wreke me on the pye. The mayde dyde so and they bothe went vp ⁊ made an hole through

the coueryng of y^e^ house ryght ouer the pye / and there thrugh caste sande clay stones ⁊ water vpon the pye, somoch that the poore pye was nere dede ⁊ on the morne the yonge man went erly out at a backe dore. And whan the good man was comen home as his custume was he went ⁊ vysyted his pye and sayd to her, O pye my welbeloued byrde / say me howe y^u^ haste fared the whiles that I haue been out. She sayd, mayster I shall tel you tydynges that I haue herde. your wyfe as sone as ye were gone by the nyght tyme she lete a man come i*n* and as I that herde I tolde hym y^t^ I wolde shewe it to you at your comynge home / that not withstondynge she lad hym in to your chamber, ⁊ slepte with hȳ al nyght. ye demaunded me also howe y^t^ I haue done in your absence. And I saye you of a trouth that I was neuer so nygh my deth as I was that same nyght w^t^ snowe hayle ⁊ rayne y^t^ fyll vpon my body, so longe durȳge that I was almoste left for dede. The wyfe whā she herde that sayd too her husbonde, Syr ye byleue your pye now may ye here what she sayth / she cōplaynyth y^t^ in y^e^ same nyght there fyll so moche snowe hayle ⁊ rayne vpon her y^t^ she was almost dede, ⁊ yet ther was none of thē al that same nyght, for ther was not in a yere a fayrer ne a clerer nyght than it was ⁊ therfore from hensforth byleue her not. Tho went y^e^ good man to his neyghbours ⁊ demaūded of them yf y^t^ nyght were ony tempest or rayne. They answered y^t^ some of them had waked all y^e^ nyght, ⁊ in all y^t^ yere they had not sene a fayrer nyght. Tho we*n*t he to his house ⁊ sayd to his wyfe, I

haue foūden you in y^e^ trouth for y^e^ nyght was fayr ⁊ clere as I vnderstonde of your neyghbours. ye may now knowe of a trouth sayd she y^t^ py is a lyer. w^t^ her lesȳges she hath sowen ⁊ made discorde betwix vs, ⁊ ouer that I am diffamed thrugh y^e^ cite by her fals lesynges. than y^e^ burgeys went to y^e^ pye ⁊ sayd wherfore haste y^u^ made lyes ⁊ fals tales betwix me ⁊ my wyfe. Is this y^e^ thāke that I haue for y^e^ mete that I was wont to gyue y^e^ w^t^ myn owne hōdes euery day ⁊ haste also therby my wyfe brought in to grete dyffamacyon thrugh al the towne. The pye answered, god knoweth y^t^ I can not lye for that I sawe ⁊ herde y^t^ haue I shewed to you. Than sayd he, y^u^ lyest. Haste thou not sayd vnto me that in y^e^ same nyghte was hayle ⁊ snowe ⁊ rayne that y^u^ haddest nerehōnde loste thy lyfe whiche is false. And therfore from hensforth y^u^ shalt make no mo lesynges ne dyscorde betwix me and my wyfe / ⁊ toke y^e^ pye and brake her necke. As the wyfe sawe that she was ryght glad ⁊ sayd now haue ye done well, now maye we all our lyue dayes lyue in reste ⁊ peas. And whan he had slayne y^e^ pye, he loked vp ⁊ sawe in the top of y^e^ house a laddre ⁊ a vessel w^t^ water, sand ⁊ stones. and as he that behelde, he perceyued the falshede of his wyfe, and cryēd with a loude voyce, Woo be too me that for my wyues wordes I haue my pye slayne and all my solace and ioye loste. y^e^ why (*sic*) the in all thynges sayd to me trouthe. And as he had thus doone anone for sorowe lefte his marchaundyse and all his house and went to wardes the holy londe, and neuer retorned ayen towardes his wyfe. Thañe

the mayster sayd to themperour, Syr haue ye vnderstande what I haue sayd. he answered ryght well. the mayster sayd, was not y$^{t}$ a false ☩ cursed wyfe y$^{t}$ so by her lesynges caused y$^{e}$ pye for to be slayne. The emperour sayd, In trouthe she was full of falsenesse. I forthynke gretly the pye, the whiche for her true saynge lost her lyfe Verely I say to you y$^{t}$ ye haue tolde me a fayr exa*m*ple therfore th[i]s day my sone shal not dy. Tho sayd the master, Syr yf ye do so ye do wysely, ☩ I thāke you that ye haue spared your sone, this day for my wyll, and to god I commende you.

## *The Fourth Complaynte of the Empresse.*

Whan thempresse herde that y^e^ chylde was not yet dede, she made grete noyse ⁊ cryenges in such wyse that she was herde thrugh the palays ⁊ sayd, Woo be to me that euer I was made Empresse, wolde god I had dyed whan I was broughte in too thyse partyes. whan the emperour herde y^e^ noyse ⁊ crye that she made, he entred in to the chamber, ⁊ conforted her as moche as he myght ⁊ demaunded the cause of her lamentacyon / whiche sayd, O myn owne lorde haue no wonder though that I be in this grete sorowe and agony for I am your wyfe, ⁊ in your company by your sone I am shamed as ye sawe me lately all be bled ⁊ scratched. ⁊ ye haue promysed me that he sholde therfor be hanged / ⁊ yet he lyueth. wherfore sholde I not sorow. Themperour answered be content ⁊ pleased / and I shall do iustyse vpon my sone to morowe. But in that I forbare hym yesterday was at the meuyng of one of the maysters by an example Than sayd she, Haue ye forboren to do iustyce

for one worde. were it soo for all the worlde ye sholde not let to do iustyce / ꝛ ye saye for the example of one mayster ye haue lefte it. I fere me it shall happen with you ꝛ w$^{t}$ youre maysters as vpon a tyme it fortuned too an Emperoure with his seuen wyse maysters. The empeperoure (*sic*) sayde I praye you tell me that example. She sayd.

To what entent sholde I laboure in vayne / for yesterdaye I shewed you a good example and it auayled not. for whatsomeuer I shewe for youre honoure and proufyte that the maysters of your sone torne vp and downe to your destructyon, as in this present example I shall clerely shewe you. To whome themperour sayd O my best beloued lady tell me that example, that by the same I maye the better beware / for though that I respyted my sones lyfe for one daye / I shal not therfore gyue hym his lyfe / for that is dyfferred / it is not therfore auferred. And she saide, gladly I shall shewe it for your proufyte. and began to tell it as here after foloweth.

## *The Fourthe Example of the Empresse.*

Somtyme was in the cyte of rome seuen wyse maysters by whome all y^e^ empyre was gouerned ⁊ ruled. And themperour that than was dyde no thynge or attempte w^t^out the counseyll of them. as they vnderstode that themperour was to them soo inclyned, y^t^ without theym he sholde ordeyne or doo noo thynge. in y^e^ meane tyme they made by theyr arte and connȳg y^t^ themperour sholde clerely se as longe as he was in his palays but anone as he was out of his palays, he was made blynde / ⁊ that dyde they to the ente*n*t y^t^ they myght the more frely intromytte themself of all thynges that apperteyned to themperour, by y^e^ whiche they gate ⁊ wanne too theym grete profyte ⁊ lucre of goodes. ⁊ after that they had made ⁊ wroughte that experyment, they coude neuer chaunge it ne fordo it, afterwarde, but themperour abode styl blȳd many yeres. Then the vii maysters made ⁊ ordeyned throughout thempyre, that yf ony man had dremed a dreme he sholde come vnto them w^t^ a florene of golde or of syluer, ⁊ they sholde expowne ⁊ declare

vnto them the Interpretacyon of theyr dremes wherby ꝯ by other vniuste meanes they obteyned moche more substaunce ꝯ money of yᵉ people than themperour dyde. Soo vpon a tyme whan he sate at the table wᵗ the empresse he began to syghe ꝯ sorowe in hymselfe. and whan she perceyued that she enquyred dylygently of hym yᵉ cause of his heuynesse ꝯ doloure. Themperour sayde / sholde not that to me be heuy ꝯ sorowfull yᵗ I so longe haue been blynde ꝯ out of my palays / ꝯ of yᵗ can haue or fynde no remedy. To whome spake thempresse ꝯ sayd, my lorde here my counseyll ꝯ it shall neuer repent you yf ye do therafter. In your courte ye haue vii wyse maysters by whome ye ꝯ all yᵉ empyre is gouerned yf ye nowe beholde ꝯ marke this in your mȳde / ye shall fynde that they are yᵉ cause of your blyndnesse ꝯ dysease. ꝯ yf it be so they are worthy too dye a shamefull deth. Therfore take hede to my coūseyl and aduyse. Sende ye for them ꝯ shewe vnto them youre dysease ꝯ infyrmyte, ꝯ threte them on payne of theyr lyues, yᵗ they sholde fynde a remedy to make you hole of your syknesse ꝯ blyndnes. This coūseyl pleased the emperour well. ꝯ anone sent for yᵉ maysters And whā they were come, themperour anone shewed vnto them his infyrmyte ꝯ blyndenes. ꝯ charge them vpon payne [of] deth / yᵗ they sholde seke a rememedy (*sic*) ꝯ make hym hole therof. Tho answered they, Ye desyre of vs a thinge that is dyffusyfe ꝯ harde for vs to do thus shortly but gyue vs respyte ꝯ dayes ꝯ in yᵉ tenth day we shall gyue you answere. Themperour was therwith well content ꝯ pleased. Then yᵉ seuen wyse maysters

went to counseyll, how they myght y$^{t}$ best chaunge ¶ alter / ¶ that in noo maner coude they fynde y$^{e}$ meane howe they myght put awaye y$^{e}$ blyndnes from the Emperour. Wherfore they were all ryght sorowfull. ¶ sayde amonge them self, w$^{t}$oute we fynde a remedye we are all but dede men. Soo went they from thens thrugh out al thēpyre ¶ sought yf they coude fynde ony remedy or coūseyll therfore. It hapned them vpon a tyme goynge thrugh a cyte, ¶ in y$^{e}$ myddes therof they founde chyldren playnge. ¶ a[f]ter them came a man w$^{t}$ a talente or florene of golde ¶ sayd to them, Good maysters this nyght I haue dremed a dreme, thenterpretacōn therof I wolde fayne knowe. Wherfore I pray you shewe me what it sygnyfyeth ¶ take this golde to you. That herde one of y$^{e}$ chyldren y$^{t}$ played among y$^{e}$ other ¶ sayd too hy*m*, gyue me y$^{e}$ golde ¶ not them, ¶ I shall expowne thy dreme. The man sayde, I dremed this nyghte y$^{t}$ in the myddes of myn orchyerde was a grete sprynge of water, wherof came many smal spry*n*ges y$^{t}$ all myn orchyerde was full ¶ overflowen w$^{t}$ water. The chylde sayd, take a spade ¶ dygge in y$^{e}$ same place there as ye thought that y$^{e}$ water outsprange, ¶ there shall ye fynde an horde of golde so grete that ye ¶ all your chylderne & lynage shall be for euer ryche. The man dyde as y$^{e}$ chylde had shewed hym ¶ found ye tresoure accordynge to hys wordes. Tho went y$^{e}$ ma*n* to y$^{e}$ chylde ¶ offred hym a pounde weyght of y$^{e}$ golde y$^{t}$ he had founde for y$^{e}$ interpretacyon of his dreme ¶ he wold none receyue but cōmytted hym to y$^{e}$ prayers of y$^{e}$ man. The vii.

maysters whan they herde ye chylde so wysely expowne ye dreme, they sayd to hym, gode chylde what is your name he answered ⁊ sayde I called Merlyne. Then sayd ye maysters, we se clerely grete wysedome in you, we shal shewe vnto you a grete mater, ⁊ of yt we wolde gladly yt ye coude fynde a remedy. The chylde sayd, shewe me your mater. And they sayd themperour of rome as longe as he is in his palays he hath his syght clere wtout ony impedymēt and as sone as he is gone out of his palays he is soo blȳde yt he may not se. Yf ye can now det*er*myne ye cause herof ⁊ fy*n*de a remedy yt he may be eased ⁊ haue h[i]s syght ayen ye shall haue grete rewardes ⁊ honoures of thēperour. The chylde sayd, I know ye cause as wel of his blȳdhede as of ye remedy. They sayd to hy*m*, Come wt vs to themperour ⁊ ye shal be rewarded so largely yt ye shall be pleased. To whome ye chylde sayd, I am redy to go wt you. And whan they came wt ye chylde before themperour they sayd to hy*m*. Lorde loo here this childe yt we haue brought afore you ye which shal fulfyll your desyre as touchȳge the cause of your blȳdenes as ye recouerȳge of your syghte. Themperour sayd, Good maysters woll ye take it vpon you ⁊ abyde therby that ye chylde shall do wt me. They all sayd ye, for we be experte in his wysedome. Themperour torned hymself towardes ye chylde and sayde, wyll ye vndertake to tell me the cause of my blindnesse ⁊ the remedye. The chylde answered ⁊ sayd, my lorde the emperour lede me in to your bedchamber, ⁊ there I shal shewe you what is to be done And as he was therin broughte he sayd to ye seruaūtes, take of ye clothes of the bedde, ⁊ all

thapparayle, ¶ ye shall se wonders. And as y$^{t}$ was done they sawe a well smokyng y$^{t}$ had vii sprȳges or floodes, the whiche whan thēperour sawe meruayled gretly. y$^{e}$ chyld sayd ye se this wel ¶ w$^{t}$out it be quēched ye shal neuer haue your sygt. thēperour sayd, how may y$^{t}$ be. y$^{e}$ chyld sayd, but by one way. Themperour sayde, Shewe vs than the meane, ¶ yf it be possyble to me it shall be done, y$^{t}$ I maye recouer ayen my syght as well w$^{t}$out as w$^{t}$in. To whome the chylde sayd. my lorde y$^{e}$ vii. sprynges of this well are thyse vii. wyse maysters, y$^{e}$ whiche you ¶ your Empyre hythertoo haue trayterously gouerned ¶ haue you made blȳde as ye be w$^{t}$oute your palays y$^{t}$ they youre subgettes by extorcyon myght plucke ¶ pyll, ye not seynge, but nowe they knowe not y$^{e}$ remedy. Here ye nowe my counseyll. ¶ this well shal be quenched ¶ extyncte. do stryke of y$^{e}$ fyrste maysters hede ¶ anone ye shall y$^{e}$ fyrste sprynge quenched. ¶ so by ordre one after an other, tyll y$^{t}$ they are all beheded, ¶ anone all the sprynges w$^{t}$ the well shall be vanysshed and gone awaye / ¶ ye shall haue ayen your syght as ye had afore. And as this was done ¶ fulfylled / the well with the vii. sprynges were vanysshed. And as themperour had his syghte ayen he made the chylde a grete lorde ¶ gaue hy*m* grete habundaūce of goodes. After that spake thempresse, my lorde haue ye this example well perceyued that I haue tolde you. ¶ he sayd ye in the best wyse. ye haue recyted a good and a ryall example. Than sayd she, In the same wyse your vii. wyse maysters intende too doo with you, by theyre false narracyons, that your sone may reygne vpon you / that god forbede.

## *The Declaratyon of the Example.*

This welle is youre sone wherof oute flowen seuen sprynges, that sygnefye the seuen wyse maysters the whiche soone ye maye not destroye withoute the vii. maysters be made feble ℈ broughte too noughte that done this well that is your sone w$^{t}$ all his cauyllacyons ℈ wyles shal not scape / but lete hym be hanged fyrste leste that he haue helpe of his maysters / ℈ forth after co[n]sequently y$^{e}$ vii. maysters. And so ye shall gouerne ℈ guyde your empyre in reste ℈ peas. Themperour anone cōmaunded his seruauntes to lede his so*n* to the galowes / whiche they were lothe to do. So was there than a grete multytude of people gadred with grete noyse ℈ bewaylynge so that the noyse came to y$^{e}$ eres of y$^{e}$ fourth mayster named Malquydrac. y$^{e}$ whiche lepte vpon his hors / ℈ hasted hym to y$^{e}$ palays. So mette w$^{t}$ hym his dyscyple ℈ dyde reuerence to hy*m* / ℈ recommaunded hym vnto hym / ℈ whan he came before themperour ℈ had done his obeysaunce ℈ reuere*n*ce as apperteyned. Themperour answered ℈ sayde. Lytell thanke haue ye olde cursed caytyfe for y$^{e}$ techȳge of my sone for I delyuered you my sone

well spekȳge ꝛ in all thynge ryght vertuous. And ye haue sent hym a fole dompe / ꝛ a rybaude / for he wolde haue belayne w$^{t}$ force my wyfe / ꝛ therfore all ye with him togyder shall be hanged. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ mayster, My lorde I haue not that deserued of you. god knoweth why your sone speketh not. in shorte tyme ye shal perceyue other thȳges. but y$^{e}$ tyme is not yet comen. But in y$^{t}$ ye say he wolde haue oppressed your wyfe, y$^{t}$ is not gospel ne proued, ne for one sy*n*guler p[er]sone ye shold not iuge to deth your sone. yf now for y$^{e}$ wordes of your wyfe ye iuge your sone to dye, it wil be wors to you than to an olde man of his wyfe. ꝛ that I shall proue. Too whome themperour sayd, Thynke ye to doo with me ye olde dotarde, as somtyme seuen wyse men dyde to an emperour. Therto sayd y$^{e}$ mayster The offence or trespace of one or yet of twenty, may not founde to the rebuke ꝛ blame of all other, for ouer al the worlde there bee bothe good ꝛ euyll. But one thynge of a trouth I shall shewe you. that euyll shall come to you yf ye this daye do your sone to deth for the wordes of your wyfe. the whiche I wolde shewe by a notable example. Than sayd the emperoure woll ye that recyte for our lernynge. The mayster sayde, Yf ye wyll calle ayen your sone, ꝛ kepe hym tyll I haue made recytacyon of the example. ꝛ than what someuer ye shal thi*n*ke best to done with hym, doo it. I shall reherce this example or elles not. The emperour cōmaunded that he sholde be called ayen and desyred the mayster to say as here after ensueth or foloweth.

## *The Example of the Fourthe Mayster.*

There was an olde knyght ꝑ a ryght wyse man that longe lyued without wyfe ꝑ chylde. His frendes came to hym many tymes ꝑ counseyled and exhorted him that he sholde take a wyfe. The knyght thus counseyled ꝑ styred by his frendes soo oftymes that at the laste he agreed too theym. And they gaue hym to wyfe the doughter of the prouost of rome that ryche was ꝑ ryght fayre, whome whan he had seene anone he was made blynde ꝑ taken in her loue, ꝑ began to loue her meruaylously wel and whan they had ben a certayne space togyder ꝑ had no fruyte ne chylde. Upon a tyme in a mornynge it happened that she went to the chyrche where she met w$^{t}$ her moder, ꝑ saluted her as it behoued. My dere doughter sayd the moder how pleaseth you your maryage ꝑ your husbode: she sayd ryght euyll, for ye haue gyuen to me an olde lame man / me in al thȳges dyspleasynge. I wolde ye had that same tyme buryed me, for I had leuer lye ꝑ ete with a swyne than with hym, and therfore I may no longer thus endure, but I must

loue another Tho sayd y^e^ moder, god forbede that My dere doughter howe longe tyme I haue be with your fader ℈ yet hytherto I neuer medled me with suche folysshenes. The doughter sayde, moder it is noo meruayle for ye bothe in your youth met togyder, ℈ the one toke solace of the other, ℈ I may receyue of hym noo maner of solace corporall for he is colde / ℈ vpon y^e^ bed he lyeth as styll as a stone, or as a thyng immouable: The moder answered, yf ye wyll loue another say me what he is. The doughter sayd a preest I wyl loue. to whome y^e^ moder sayd it were better to you ℈ lesse syn to loue a knyght or a squyer than a preest. ℈ the doughter sayde, If I shold loue a knyght or a gentel squyer in shorte tyme he wolde be wery of me, ℈ after y^t^ he wolde do me shame ℈ tell it ouer all, ℈ so it is not of the preest, for he wyll holde and kepe his owne honoure ℈ counseyll as well as mȳn, And also spyrytuell men be more true to theyr loues than the seculer men. The mod*er* sayd, Here my counseyll ℈ it shall be good for you. Olde folkes are wylly ℈ fell, tempte your husbonde fyrst ℈ yf ye scape hym w^t^out doynge ony harme or smytȳge, than loue the preest. The doughter sayd I maye not so longe abyde. The moder sayd vpon my blessynge abyde tyll ye haue proued hym. The doughter sayde vpon your blessynge I wyll abyde so longe, tyll I haue attempted hy*m* but fyrst say me how that I shal proue hym. The moder sayde, He hath in his orchyerde a tree whiche he loueth moche. do y^t^ to be smyten downe whyles he is oute at hontynge. ℈ ayenst his comynge make

hym there a fyre, ꝛ yf he forgyue it you thā maye surely loue the preest. As she had herde the coũseyl of her moder she went to her house. To whom her husbonde sayd, Where haue ye ben so longe. She answered I haue ben in the chyrche where as I met w$^{t}$ my moder ꝛ w$^{t}$ her a lytell I haue talked ꝛ comyned, ꝛ so began proprely for to dyssymyle. After mydday y$^{e}$ knighte rode out for to hu*n*te. Then she thynkȳge vpon y$^{e}$ counseyll of her moder went to the gardyner ꝛ sayde to hy*m*. Cut downe this yonge tree newly planted that I may make a fyre therof to warme my lorde withal at his comynge from huntȳge, for it is a grete wynd ꝛ a ryght sharpe colde. The gardyner sayde, Madame y$^{t}$ wyll I not do, for my lorde loueth better that tre than he dothe all y$^{e}$ other trees neuertheles I shal wel helpe you to gadre wood ynough for to make withall a good fyre but in onywyse this I wyl not hewe downe. She herde that, ꝛ boldly she toke y$^{e}$ axe from y$^{e}$ gardyner ꝛ hewed downe the tree her selfe ꝛ made y$^{e}$ gardyner w$^{t}$ other to bere it home. At euyn whan y$^{e}$ lorde came from huntynge he was sore a colde The lady lete make a grete fyre, ꝛ went ꝛ met w$^{t}$ hym, ꝛ set hym on a stole afore the fyre to warme. And as he a lytell whyle had sytten he perceyued y$^{e}$ odoure of the fyre. ꝛ called to hym y$^{e}$ gardyner ꝛ sayd, I fele by this odour y$^{t}$ my newe plante brenneth in the fyre. The gardiner sayde, Lorde it is trewe, my lady your wyfe hath felled it down. The knyght sayd to her god forbede that my plante sholde be cut downe by you. She answered anone ꝛ sayd, Lorde I haue done

it knowyng the weder colde ꝛ you also colde. ꝛ therfore I haue ordeyned this fyre for your cōforte. As the knyght y$^{t}$ herde he loked angrely vpon her ꝛ sayd, O cursed woman, how werest y$^{u}$ so hardy to hewe downe so gentyl a yonge tre y$^{e}$ whiche y$^{u}$ knowest wel y$^{t}$ I loued aboue al other trees As she that herde she began to wepe ꝛ excuse her selfe ꝛ sayd My lorde I haue done it for your good ꝛ prouffyte, ꝛ ye take it so greuously. ꝛ began to cry wo wo be to me. Anone as y$^{e}$ knyght sawe y$^{e}$ wepȳge ꝛ teeres of his wyfe ꝛ herde her cause he was meued w$^{t}$ mercy saynge to her, Cesse of your wepȳg, ꝛ beware how y$^{t}$ ye ony more angre or trouble me in ony thȳge / that I loue. The next daye erly in the mornȳge / she went ayen to the chyrchewarde, ꝛ met w$^{t}$ her moder comȳge ayenst her. ꝛ they salued eche other. Than y$^{e}$ doughter sayd to her moder, O dere moder I wyll loue the preest, for I haue attempted my lorde as ye coūseyled me / but all for nought, for he anone forgaue it whan he sawe me a lytell wepe. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ moder, though olde men one tyme forgyue / they double the payn vpon an other tyme. ꝛ therfore I counseyll you y$^{t}$ ye an other tyme attempte hym. Tho sayde the doughter I maye no lenger abyde, for I suffer so moche payn for the loue of y$^{e}$ preest, that w$^{t}$ my tonge I canne not tell, therfore ye shall perdone me I wyll noo more folowe or do after your counseyll. than sayde the moder, for the loue that the chylde sholde haue vnto the moder attempte hym yet ones. ꝛ for your faders blessynge / and thenne yf ye goo quyte w$^{t}$out

ony harme or betinge, loue the preest in the name of god. tho answered ye doughter, it is to me a grete payn so long tyme to abyde. neuertheles for ye blessyng of my fader I shal ons atēpte hym. but say me how I shall begyn. the moder sayd I vnderstande yt he hath a lytell hoūde yt he loueth wel ⁊ yt kepith his bed. cast ye hoūd wt so grete might afore his face that it dy ⁊ yf ye scape wtout a strype or that he forgyue it lyghtely, in the name of god than loue the preest. Than sayd the doughter, I shall in all thynge doo after your coūseyll, for there is noo doughter lyuynge to day yt wolde more gladly haue ye blessynge of the fader ⁊ the moder than I. And so she bad her moder fare well / ⁊ went to her house ayen / ⁊ that day wt grete importunyte ⁊ trouble of herte she brought too the nyght. ⁊ whan the nyghte was comen, she cōmaunded the bed to be couered wt pupure ⁊ wt clothe of golde the whyles the knyght sate by the fyre. And whan the bed was thus made redy. the lytell hounde as he was accustomed lepte on the bedde ⁊ she toke hym by the hynder legges, ⁊ wt a wood ⁊ a malycyous herte she cast it ayenst the wall yt it lay styll dede. Whan the good olde knyght that sawe / he was merueylously angry. ⁊ sayd wt a loude voyce too his wyfe, O worste ⁊ most cruell of all wycked wymmen how coudest yu fynde in thyn herte that lytell gentyll hounde to sle, yt I so moche loued. Lorde sayd she haue ye not sene how the hounde wt his foule fete hath our bed that is soo precyously couered with ryche clothes made foule comynge out of the myre: And the knyghte sayde wt

moche anger, knewe ye not y$^{t}$ I loued moche better that lytell hounde than the bed. Whan she herde that, anone she began pytyously to wepe ℈ sayd woo be to me that I was borne for all thynge that I doo for the best it is all tourned in to the worste. The knyght wolde not suffre the wepynge and weymentynge of his wyfe. but for that y$^{t}$ he loued her soo moche he sayd to her leue or cesse your wepȳge for I forgyue you it all togyder. And I counseyll you that ye beware how that ye dysplease me from hens forth / ℈ they went toogyder to bed. Upon y$^{e}$ morowe she rose vp erly ℈ went to the chyrche where as she found her moder / to whome whan she hadde done reuerence as it behoued, She sayd, moder now wyll I loue y$^{e}$ preste, for I haue now attempted the seconde tyme my husbonde ℈ all thynges he suffred. The moder sayde, O my dere doughter there is noo cruelte or falshede aboue the cruelte of olde folkes. ℈ therfore I cōuseyll you y$^{t}$ ye yet ones proue hym. To whom the doughter answered, Moder ye laboure in vayne. for yf ye wyst what ℈ how moche payne y$^{t}$ I suffer for y$^{e}$ prestes loue ye sholde rather helpe me yf ye loued me. The moder sayd, Here me doughter this one tyme, ℈ I shal neuer let you more. Thȳke howe y$^{t}$ ye haue souked mylke of my brestes: ℈ the grete payne that I suffred for ycu at your byrth. By thyse paynes my dere doughter I desyre of ℈ I charge you y$^{t}$ ye denye me not this good petycyon. ℈ I promyse to god I shall no more let nor hȳder you of your entente: but rather helpe you therto./ Tho answered y$^{e}$ doughter, it is to me a grete payne

to absteyne me ꝛ forbere my selfe, so longe from the loue of the preest. neuerthelesse for yᵉ grete charges that ye haue layde too me, and also for yᵗ ye haue made a vowe no more for to lette me, but to further me, tell me how I shall attempte hy*m*, ꝛ I shal ones yet put it in aduenture. The moder sayd, I know well that on sondaye next comyng he entendeth to haue vs all to dyner ꝛ there shall be your fader ꝛ I and all your frendes ꝛ al yᵉ best of the cyte. And whan ye are set in your place ꝛ all the metes are brought ꝛ serued vpon the table / faste one of the keyes preuely yᵗ hangeth at your gyrdell in the table clothe ꝛ than fayne to haue forgoten your knyfe and say thyse wordes openly. Se what a shorte wytte that I am of, I haue forgoten my knyf in my chambre / ꝛ ryse vp hastely ꝛ go. ꝛ yᵉ cloth wᵗ al the metes ye shall caste down ꝛ ouerthrowe vpon the grounde. And yf ye scape wᵗout payn I make a vowe to god I shall neuer let you after. The doughter sayde yᵗ shall I gladly doo ꝛ so toke her leue ꝛ departyd. The feste daye came yᵗ all as the moder sayd were boden. The seruaũtes made redy ꝛ couered yᵉ table. All were set at yᵉ table. ꝛ the doughter sate ouer ayenste her lorde. And whan the table was well serued wᵗ metes ꝛ other thynges as therto belonged / yᵉ lady of the house sayd with an high voyce, se how forgeteful I am of mynd I haue lefte my knyfe in my chamber yᵉ whiche I muste fetche / ꝛ rose hastely vp and drewe yᵉ clothe with all the mete that was vpon it with her. a*n*d all the golde vessels ꝛ saltes lay vpon yᵉ groũde. The knyght vexed sore angrye in his herte, but

for shame he dyssymyled afore his gestes, ꝛ cōmaūded on other clene clothe ꝛ other metes to be brought ꝛ w$^{t}$ Joy and myrth he solyted ꝛ meued his gestes to ete and make good chere. so that by hy*m* they were all gladed. The feste or dyner done they gaue all thankȳges to y$^{e}$ knyght ꝛ toke theyr leue ꝛ departed euery man towardes his owne house. Upon y$^{e}$ nexte day in the mornȳge y$^{e}$ knyghte arose erly ꝛ went to the chyrche ꝛ herde a masse the which ended went to a barbour ꝛ sayd too hym, Mayster are ye experte in blode letynge in what vayne y$^{t}$ I wyll desyre you. He sayde, syr I am experte in what vayne y$^{t}$ ye can name in mannes body. The knyghte sayd, I am well contente come on w$^{t}$ me. ꝛ whan he was comen to his house he entred in to his chamber where his wyfe laye in bed ꝛ sayd to her Ryse vp shortely. Than sayd she, what shall I do vp thus erly it is not yet nyne the clocke. The knyght sayd, ye muste ryse vp, for ye muste be letten blode on both your armes. she sayd, I was neuer laten blode / ꝛ shall I nowe blede. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ knyght, that is trouth, ꝛ therfor ye are a fole. For thȳke ye not y$^{t}$ ye hewe fyrst downe my tree, ꝛ an other tyme ye kylled my lytell hoūde ꝛ yesterday ye shamed me afore all our frendes ꝛ parentes. ꝛ the fourth is yf I sholde suffer you thus too go forthe ye sholde me for euer confoūde ꝛ shame. the cause herof I consyder y$^{t}$ ye haue euyll ꝛ wylde blode w$^{t}$in your body, ꝛ therfore I wyll that y$^{t}$ corrupte blode shall be drawen out that ye from hensforth shal no more put me to shame ꝛ angre, and lete to be made a grete

fyre. and she stode and cryed and helde vp her hondes towardes the heuen and sayde, My lorde forgyue me this t[r]espace * / and haue pyte vpon me at this tyme, and I shal neuer more offende you. The knyghte sayd pray for no mercy, for by the mercy that god hath wroughte, without that thou holdest oute thyn arme strayte I shall sone haue thyn herte blood. and he sayd also to the barbour, smyte harde ⁊ make a depe hole in her arme, or elles I shall gyue you a grete strype. Than smote y^e^ barbour so sore that the bloode came habundaūtly out. and the knyght wolde not suffer hym to staunche it vnto the tyme that she chaunged coloure in her vysage. And as this was done the knyght bad to be stopped or staūche y^t^ vayne. ⁊ bad y^e^ barbour smyte the vayne vpon y^e^ other arme. Theñe cryed she w^t^ a loude voyce, My swete husbonde haue compassyon vpon me for now I deye. The knyght answered, my wyfe ye sholde haue afore thought on th[i]s or that ye haue done to me thyse thre euyll tournes or despytes. Theñe she helde out her left arme. ⁊ y^e^ barbour smote therin an hole y^t^ the blood came out ryght hudgely. ⁊ suffred her to blede vnto the tyme that the coloure in her vysage chaunged ⁊ that she swouned / Than sayd the knyght, now bynde that arme ⁊ staūche it. ⁊ sayd to her now goo to bed, ⁊ studye and thynke hensforth how ye may amende your self or elles I shall draw y^e^ bloode of your herte. And as this was done he gaue the barbour his rewarde and he wente ayen vnto his own house. and the wyfe vnder y^e^ handes of hir

* An 'r' has been interpolated with the pen.

maydens nyghe deed was ladde to hyr bedde ⁊ bad one of hir handmaydens go to hyr moder in all haste ⁊ say that she come speke with me afore I deye. The moder whan she harde y$^{t}$ she was gladde of y$^{e}$ correctyon of hir doughter ⁊ hastely came to hyr / the doughter whā she herd hyr moder sayd to hir, O my moste swete moder I am almoste dede, for I haue so moche blode bled, y$^{t}$ I byleue y$^{t}$ I shal not scape y$^{e}$ deth. Tho answered y$^{e}$ moder / sayd I not too you that olde men are ryght cruell ⁊ fell, wyll ye nowe loue the preste. Whiche sayd, The deuyll may the preest confounde ⁊ shame. I wyl neuer loue other but my husbonde. Than sayde the mayster to themperour, Lorde haue ye vnderstande me. And he answered ryght well, for amonges all other y$^{t}$ euer I haue herde this was the best example. Thre euyll dedes she dyde vnto her husbonde ⁊ I doute not but yf she had done ye fourth she sholde haue shamed hym for euer. Than sayd y$^{e}$ mayster therfore I counseyll you y$^{t}$ ye beware of your wyfe leste that it happen worse to you. for why yf ye doo to deth your onely sone for her wordes, ye shall be deceyued in y$^{e}$ ende, ⁊ for euer ye shal forthynke it. The Emperour sayd truly mayster this day my sone shal not dye. The mayster sayd My lorde I thanke you y$^{t}$ ye for min example and my sake this day haue spared your sone.

## *The Fyfth Complaynte of the Empresse.*

The empresse herȳg yᵗ the chylde was not yet dede apparayled ꝛ clothed her in her vesture or clothȳge. ꝛ lete to be ordeyned her waynes ꝛ cartes / as thoughe she wolde haue gone to her fadʳ home in her coūtre for to haue cōplayned of yᵉ grete shame yᵗ was done vntǫ her ꝛ coude haue no remedy herof. The seruaūtes seynge yᵗ went ꝛ shewed it to themperour yᵗ thempresse was goyng in to her countree. Whan he yᵗ perceyued he went to her saynge, whither are ye goynge, I hoped yᵗ ye had loued me so moche yᵗ in all yᵉ worlde ye sholde haue sought no solace but wᵗ me. To yᵗ she sayd, That is true. ꝛ therfore I go from you, for I had leuer here of your deth, than to see you dye, wᵗoute doute ye delyte soo moche to here thyse maysters, yᵗ it shall happen vpon you as it dyde to Octauian themperour yᵉ whiche wes so coueytous that ye noble men of the empyre buryed hym quycke ꝛ fylled his mouth wᵗ molten golde. Themperour sayd, Dere wyf do not that another tyme yᵉ blame to you or to me myght be layde.

Than sayd the empresse, truly y^e^ blame is yours for haue ye not promysed me many tymes that your sone sholde dye, ꝛ yet he lyueth, ꝛ therfore from hensforth I wyll no more byleue you. Then sayd themperour. It becometh not a kynge euery cause lyghtly too dyscusse, w^t^out aduyse ꝛ specyally vpon his sone, vpon whome it is not behoueful lyghtly to gyue jugement and therfore I say ꝛ pray you that ye wyll tell me somwhat by the whiche I may myselfe gouerne, for it is vtter destruccõn of a kynge w^t^out aduyse ꝛ vndescretly to gyue jugement. She answered ꝛ sayde, I wyll gladly tell you a notable example, so that from hensforth ye shall not be coueytous or desyrous to here y^e^ maysters. And began to saye in this forme.

## *The Fyfth Example of the Empresse.*

Octauianus themperour reygned in Rome ryghte ryche ꝛ coueytous. ꝛ aboue all thynges he loued golde. The cytezyens yᵗ tyme of Rome dyde moche harme ꝛ many grete outrages to other nacyons. In soo moche that dyuerse nacyons ꝛ regyons were meued ꝛ styred ayenst yᵉ Romayns. In that tyme there was mayster Uirgilius, yᵉ whiche excelled in magique ꝛ in other scyences all other maysters. The cytezeyens prayed hym that he by his arte ꝛ connȳge wolde make somwhat by the whiche they of theyr ennemyes myght haue warny*n*g ꝛ knowlege byfore. Wherby that they myght puruey for themselfe yᵉ better. He lete doo make by his arte and connȳge a toure, ꝛ aboue vpon yᵉ toure dyde to be set as many ymages as in al the worlde were regyons and prouy*n*ces. and in the myddes of the toure he let to be made and set an ymage, whiche helde in his hande an appell or a grete roūde balle of golde. And euery ymage of the toure helde in his hand a lytell bell, and stode torned lokynge towardes his owne prouynce to hym assygned. And as often-

tymes as ony prouynce wolde styre or rebel ayēste the romaynes, so often torned hym the ymage of y$^{t}$ londe ꝛ range the bell. That herȳge the cytezeyns of Rome armed themselfe ꝛ to that prouynce yede with all theyr myght for that londe to kepe vnder. And soo was there no londe so grete y$^{t}$ coude wreke them vpo*n* the romaynes, and therfore were they bedradde and fered ouer all the worlde. After that Mayster Uirgilius* made for the solace and conforte of the poor people a lyght that alwaye brende. and by that lyghte he made two bathes, the one of them hote, in the whiche the poore people myghte bathe and wasshe theym / ꝛ that other colde in the whiche they myghte theymselfe refresshe. and betwyx that lyghte and the bathes he made an ymage standynge, in whos forhede was wryten: He y$^{t}$ smyteth me shall anone haue vengeaunce. This ymage stode there many yeres. At the laste there came a clerke and behelde that ymage ꝛ radde this wrytynge / and thoughte in hymselfe, what vengeaũce myght he fynde therfore. I byleue better that yf ony man sholde smyte the that thou fyllest there w$^{t}$ to y$^{e}$ erthe, he sholde fynde some tresoure vnder thy sete. ꝛ therfore is thy wrytynge that no man sholde haue it. ꝛ the clerke lyfte vp hys hande ꝛ gaue the ymage a grete stroke y$^{t}$ it fell to y$^{e}$ grou*n*de. ꝛ anone y$^{e}$ lyght was out. ꝛ the bathes were vanysshed away. ꝛ he foũde no tresoure. The poore folke y$^{t}$ perceyuynge were all sorowfull sayenge, cursyd mote he be for euer more y$^{t}$ for his synguler coueytyse hathe destroyed this ymage. ꝛ vs

* Misspelt *Ulrgilius* in the text.

hathe robbed of so grete solace ꝛ cōforthe. Here after assembled thre kynges the whiche of ye Romayns had been oppressed ꝛ suffred greate wronges. ꝛ went to coūysell wt them of theyr coūysell, how they myght best of ye Romayns be auenged. ꝛ some of them sayd. we labour in vayne, as longe as there standyth ye tour wt the ymages we maye no thynge do ayenste theym. To yt counseylle arose vp foure knyghtes and sayd to the kynges, we haue thoughte a goode remedy how we shal destroye the toure wt the ymages and yt to do and brynge aboute we wyll our lyues sette to pledge. Yf that ye wyll do ye coste. Tho sayd ye kynges what coste shall we do. They sayd, we must haue iiii tonnes full of golde. Than sayd ye kynges, take that golde ꝛ fulfyll youre promyse. The knyghtes toke ye golde ꝛ went towardes Rome. ꝛ whan they were thyder come in the nyght wtout one of ye yates in the dyche wt water they drowned one of ye tonnes wt the golde. ꝛ another tonne they drowned by the secōde yate ꝛ the thyrde tonne by ye thyrde yate. ꝛ the fourth tōn by the fourth yate they drowned. And whan they had thus done erly in the mornynge they entred in to ye cyte at an houre conuenyent whan yt themperour went ouer the marte, they dyde to hym reuerence as it behoued. Themperour seynge them demaunded frome whens they were, or what scyences or what seruyce yt they coude do. Whiche answered, we are of ferre coun*n*trees ꝛ we be sothsayers so perfyte yt there was neuer thynge so preuely or secretly

hydde but y$^{t}$ we shall fȳde it by our dremes. We haue herde that ye laboure ϒ haue pleasure in such thynges, and therfore came we to you for to wyte yf ye had ony nede of our seruyce/ Themperour sayd, I shall proue you ϒ yf it be so y$^{t}$ I fynde you true, ye shall haue of me grete rewardes ϒ thanke. they sayde we aske no thynge but y$^{e}$ haluen dele for our rewarde of the golde that by vs shall be foūden. The emperour sayd, I am therwith wel content. And thus had they with the emperour many wordes. At euen whan themperour was goyng to bedde they sayde too hym. My lorde yf it please you this nyghte shall the oldest of vs set his connynge a werke ϒ dreme, ϒ the thyrde day we shall shewe you his dreme ϒ what it sygnefyeth. Themperour sayd goo in goddis name. And they went forth w$^{t}$ grete gladnesse. ϒ all y$^{t}$ nyght they passed ouer with derysions ϒ myrth vpon truste that they sholde come to a good purpose. whan y$^{e}$ thyrde daye was comen they went erly too themperour. ϒ the fyrste of them sayd my lorde pleaseth you to goo with vs without one of y$^{e}$ yates of thy cyte ϒ I shall shewe you where as a tonne full of golde is hyd. Themperour sayd, I shall go with you and se yf it be true that ye saye. whan they were comen to the place they drewe out y$^{e}$ tonne that they there afore had put / The emperour whan he that sawe was gladde, and gaue to them theyr parte. Tho sayde the seconde dremer, my lorde this nyght I shal dreme. Themperour sayd, god gyue you a good dreme. y$^{e}$ next nyght came he ϒ toke out y$^{e}$ other

tonne. and gaue it to themperoure, ꝛ toke hym his dele. In lyke wyse dyd the thyrde. ꝛ ye fourth. vpon y^e^ whiche themperour was out of all mesure ioyus ꝛ glad ꝛ sayd he had not sene afore soo true ꝛ experte sothsayers or dremers as they were / Than sayd they al togyder at once as it had ben out of one mouth, my lorde we haue one after another dre*med* y^e^ whiche as ye haue sene be all true proued. But now yf it please you that we may dreme all togyder this nyghte, we truste that too vs shall bee shewed where we shall fynde a greate quantyte or substaũce of golde ꝛ of rychesse. the Emperoure sayde god gyue to you a gode dreme y^t^ to me and to you may be proffytable. Unto y^e^ next morowe they came ayen vnto y^e^ Emperoure ꝛ sayd to hym w^t^ joyouse ꝛ gladde vysages or coũtenaũces. My lorde we brynge gode ꝛ proffytable tydynges, for this nyght in our slepes such ꝛ so grete a tresour is to vs shewed y^e^ whiche yf ye wyll suffre it for to be soughte, ye shall be so moche enryched that in this worlde shall be none to you lyke. Themperour sayd, where sholde y^e^ fynde ye hoorde or tresoure. they sayd, vnder the fundament of the tour y^t^ the ymages standen on. The Emperoure answered, God defend that I sholde for loue of golde destroye that toure w^t^ ymages wherwith y^t^ we of oure ennemyes be defended ꝛ warned. They sayde too hym ayen, My lorde, Haue ye founde vs in our saynges otherwyse than true ꝛ ryghtful. Themperour sayd nay. O Lorde sayd they, we with our owne hondes shall gete oute y^e^ gold w^tout hurtynge

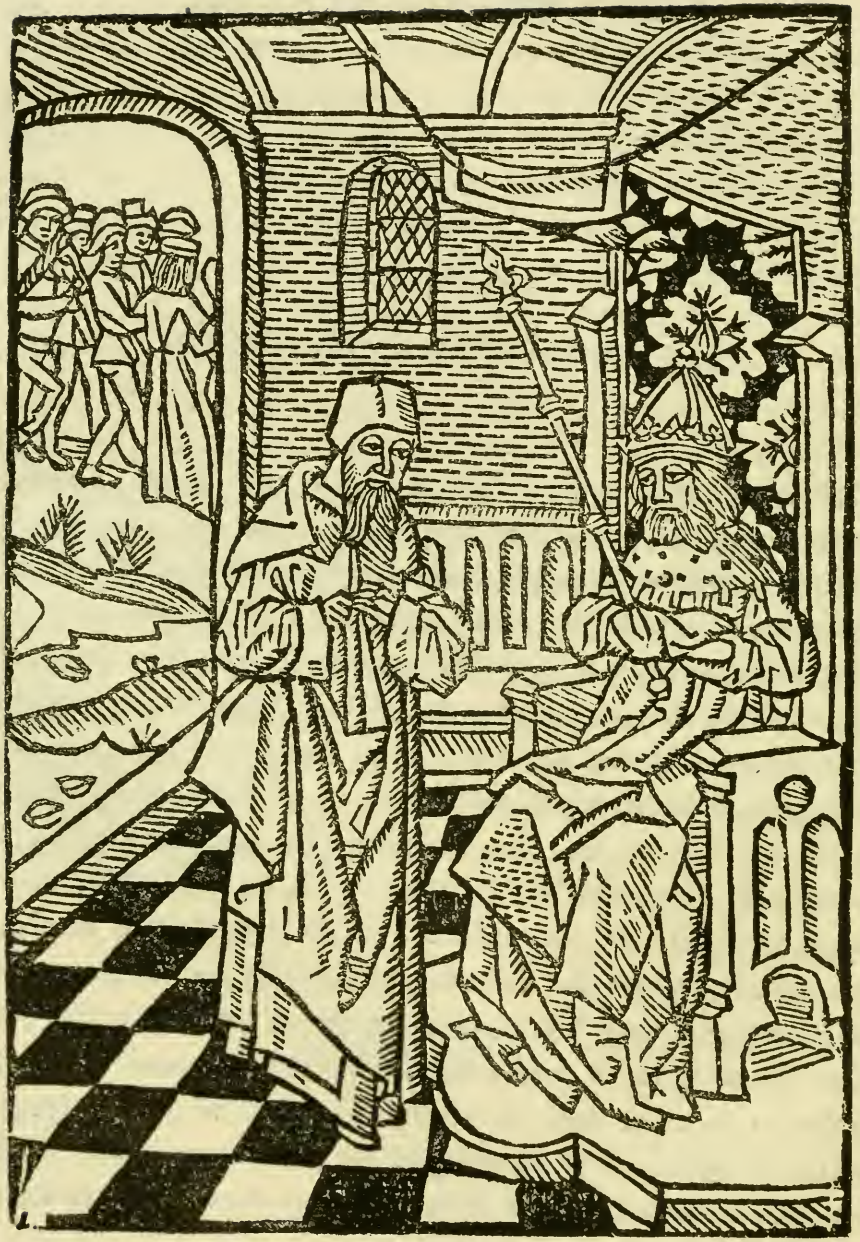
of the tour or of y^e^ ymages. And it is expedyent y^t^ secretly in the nyght by vs it be done, for drede of resorte and concours of y^e^ people leste that ye sholde ren in the noyse ¶ clamour of theym, and also that they sholde not take that good and golde away from you and vs. The Emperour sayde, Goo in the name of god and doo your beste, as ye well cañe, and I shall to morowe erly come too you. Tho went they with joye and gladnesse, and in the nyght they were laten in too the toure, and with grete haste and dylygence they vndermynded it. ¶ on the next daye erly they mounted vpon theyr horses ¶ rode ayen towardes theyr owne countre with ioye ¶ glory. And or that they came w^t^out the syght of rome / the toure fell downe. And on the morne ensuynge whan it was fallen / ¶ the Senatours it perceyued they sorowed gretely ¶ there was a grete sorowe ¶ bewaylynge thrughout all y^e^ cyte ¶ went to themperour ¶ sayd, lorde how maye it be y^t^ this tour is thus fallen, by the whiche we haue alwayes had warnynge afore of our enemyes. He answered ¶ sayd, To me came foure fals deceyuers ¶ fayned themself to be foure sothsayers ¶ y^t^ they coude fynde tresoure hyd in the groūde. And they sayd that vnd^r^ the fundacyon of y^e^ toure was hydde an vnnumerable sōme of golde y^e^ whiche they sholde well vndermyne w^t^out hurtȳge of the toure or ymages / ¶ I gaue fayth to them ¶ they haue deceyued me. they answered hy*m* / ye haue coueyted so moche golde, ¶ for your insacyate couetyse we shall be all destroyed. but fyrste your couetyse shall full (*sic*) vpon your selfe.

¶ toke ¶ ladde hym vnto ye capytoll, ¶ layde hym on his bac ¶ poured his mouth full of molten golde, sayng to hym ye haue desyred golde, ¶ therfore ye shall drynke golde ¶ after they buryed hym quycke. Not long after that came thenmyes ayenst ye Romayns, ¶ ouercame ¶ destroyed them al. Than sayd thempresse vnto themperour haue ye my lorde this example well vnderstand ¶ he sayd ryght well. Than sayd she, The tour wt the ymages is your body wt your v. wyttes, as long as ye lyue there none so hardy to trouble or make werre vpon you ne vpon your people. That hath your sone ryght well vnderstonde wt his vii. maysters ¶ wt theyre false narracyons or fables fynde how they may destroye you, for ye are ouermoche couetyse to here ¶ enclyned to them. ¶ in so moche yt they shal vndermyne you ¶ caste you vnder fote, ¶ brȳge you to nought. The ymages are your fyue wyttes yt be all lost. for they se yt ye be all chyldyshe or folyshe they shall destroy and sle you. ¶ your sone shall opteyne your empyre. Thēperour sayd, ye haue recyte to me a good exāple. wherfore it shall not to me happen as it dyde wt ye tour but my sone fyrste this daye shall be hanged. To whome thempresse sayd, yf ye doo so ye shall fare well ¶ lyue long. Upon ye nexte day he commaūded hym to be lad to hangȳge. ¶ as he was towardes ye galowes lad, came rydynge ayenst hym vpon an hors his fyfth mayster towardes ye palays. ¶ came before themperour ¶ saluted hym wt all reuerence / ¶ he despysed his salutacyon. ¶ put hym in fere of his lyfe. ¶ ye mayster sayd My lorde I haue not deserued

to dye. ¶ ye my salutacyon despyse it is not your honoure. for your sone hath not with vs be of such condycyo*n*s as ye repute hy*m* for as ye in short tyme shal fynde. ¶ that he speketh not is of his his (*sic*) grete wysdome. ¶ knowe ye y$^{t}$ he shal well speke as y$^{e}$ tyme comyth, though y$^{t}$ he now speke not, as ye in shorte tyme shall here. But ye saye y$^{t}$ he your wyfe wolde haue shamed. y$^{t}$ byleue not. for so wise a man as he is neuer sholde atte*m*te so shamful a dede. And ye put hym to dethe for your wyues wordes, ye sholde not scape without shame and vengeaunce / In lyke wise as Ypocras scaped not w$^{t}$out vengeaũce for y$^{e}$ deth of Galtenus his cosyne. The emperour sayd that wolde I fayne here and vnderstonde. The mayster sayd, what sholde auayle y$^{e}$ narracyon to tel vnto you for your prouffyte yf in the meane seasone your sone sholde be hanged. ¶ therfore yf ye wyll call ayen your sone, and therafter do as ye thynke beste it shall be at your pleasure. Themperour lete call ayen his sone and set him in pryson. And tho began y$^{e}$ mayster too tell vnder this maner as foloweth :

## *The Example of the Fyfthe Mayster.*

Somtyme there was a famous physycyan named Ypocras ryght connynge, y^e^ which exceded all other in connynge ℈ scye*n*ce he had w^t^ hym his neuewe or kynnesman y^t^ was called Galienus, y^e^ whiche he loued moche. This Galien*us* was of an excellēt wytte ℈ applyed all his wytte ℈ mynde to lerne of h[i]s vncle the scyence of physyke. Whan Ypocras apperceyued that in as moche as he coude hyde from hym hys conynge ferynge that he sholde excelle hym in y^t^ crafte, for y^e^ grete wytte that he was of. As Galienus this sawe, he studyed ℈ excersysed, in soo moche y^t^ in shorte tyme he had perfyte connynge physyke. for the whiche Ypocras enuyed hym moche. It hapned vpo*n* a tyme therafter, y^t^ the kȳge of Ungary sent his messengers vnto Ypocras that he sholde come vnto hym his sone fer to cure or make hole. Ypocras excused hȳselfe ℈ wolde no goo. but sent his cosyne Galienus w^t^ his wrytynge in the company of y^e^ messengers for to excuse hym. And whan Galienus was comen afore y^e^ kynge he was ryghte wor-



shypfully receyued. but he merueyled why that Ypocras wolde not come. he excused hym saynge that he had many grete thynges too do that he myght not come, but he hath sent me in his stede. ¶ w$^{t}$ the helpe of god I shall make hole that childe. That pleased well y$^{e}$ kynge. Galienus went to the chylde. ¶ whan he had seene his vryne, and tasted his pounces. he sayd tho *(sic)* the quene. O excellent prynces I pray you here ¶ suffer my wordes, ¶ tel me who is y$^{e}$ fad$^{r}$ of this chylde. She sayd, who sholde be his fader but my lorde the kyng. Galienus sayd, I am sure y$^{t}$ he is not the fader. She answered yf ye wyll say y$^{t}$ for a trouth I shall doo your hede to be smytn of. he answered I say yet ones agayn y$^{t}$ this ky*n*ge is not the fader and I am not therfore comen hyther to lese my hede. for I haue no suche rewarde deserued. ¶ he was goynge his waye. The quene y$^{t}$ seynge spake. O good mayster yf ye wyl kepe it secrete, ¶ not dyscouer me, I shal shewe ¶ open vnto you myn herte. The mayster sayd God defende that from me, that I to no persone sholde shewe it. and therfore O noble quene shewe it boldely to me for it shall neuer passe my mouthe after. and I shall your sone ease and make hym hole. She sayde yf ye doo that, ye shall haue of me a good rewarde. ¶ therfore here what I shall saye. Of fortune came hyther vnto my lorde, the kyng of Burgondyen, and he was so longe w$^{t}$ me conuersaunt that this chylde by hym I bare. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ mayster, fere ye not, I knewe well that it was so byfore. ¶ anone he gaue the chylde to ete beef or of an oxe to dry*n*ke. and

the chylde was eased of his infyrmyte. And whan as the kȳge herde that the chylde was quite of his malady he gaue vnto y^e^ mayster a good rewarde. but of the quene he secretly receyued and had a greter gyfte and a specyal thanke and went his waye. And whan that he was comen home, Ypocras his mayster demaunded of hym, haue ye y^t^ chyld heled. ℸ he sayd ye. Than asked he hy*m* what he gaue to hym. ℸ he sayd, I gaue hy*m* fleshe of ox beef to ete, ℸ water to dry*n*ke. Tho sayd Ypocras. Than is the moder of that chylde not true too her husbonde. y^t^ is trouth sayd Galienus. Ypocras anone was meued w^t^ enuye, ℸ thought in hymselfe yf here be not found a remedy, my scyence shall no more be set by. ℸ he shal be named and praysed aboue me. And from that day forthwarde he thought ℸ deuysed how he myght slee hym. Uppon a day Ypocras called and sayd come go we to seke and gadre herbes in the gardyne. To whome he sayd mayster I am redy. And whan they were comen in to y^e^ gardyne, Ypocras sayd, I fele that this herbe is ryght vertuous, stoupe downe ℸ gadre me of it. Galienus dyde so. and as they went aboute the gardyne, sayd Ypocras now knowe I well by y^e^ odoure of this herbe that it is better ℸ precyoser than golde. and therfore stoupe downe to the groũde ℸ drawe hym oute w^t^ the rotes for he is ryght moche. Galien*us* bowed hymself down to plucke vp the herbe. Ypocras drewe out his knyfe ℸ kylled hym. After that Ypocras fyll seke to the dethe that y^e^ strengthes of his body fayled hym and dyde as moche as he coude to helpe hymself but it wold

not be and as his scolers ꝛ dyscyples herde of it they went hastely to hy*m*. ꝛ all that they myght or coude do for the prouffyte of his helthe they dyde / but it auayled hym nothynge. Whan Ypocras that perceyued, he sayd vntoo his scolers. Goo and fetche me a grete tonne and fyll it full vnto the brynkes with water. And whan they had soo done, he sayd too them make nowe therin an hondred hooles. and whan that was doone, there wente none of the water oute. Tho sayd Ypocras. Beholde my moste dere dyscyples, how y$^{t}$ y$^{e}$ vengeaunce of god is fallen vpon me as ye openly may see, for in this tonne are an hondred holes, ꝛ yet gooth there out not one droppe, ryght so there cometh no vertue out of y$^{e}$ herbes to helpe me. and therfore what ye doo to me it helpeth not, for I must dye. But my dere chyldren yf my neuewe Galienus were now on lyue, he sholde hele me, whom I haue slayne / y$^{t}$ me sore forthynketh. ꝛ therfore y$^{e}$ vengeaũce of god cometh ouer me. And this sayd he torned hy*m* to y$^{e}$ wal ꝛ gaue vp the goost. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ mayster to themperour, My lorde vnderstande ye well what I haue sayd. He answered ye ryght well, what hurte had it bē to hym ꝛ Galienus had lyued. The mayster answerd it had ben ryght good, for Ypocras at that tyme had not dyed. ꝛ therfore by y$^{e}$ ryghtwyse Jugement of god his medycynes auayled hy*m* not. ꝛ therefore I shewe to you y$^{t}$ it shall happen worse to you, yf y$^{t}$ ye put to deth your sone for y$^{e}$ wordes of your wyfe, which in tyme of necessyte shall assyste ꝛ socoure you. ꝛ consyder ye not, y$^{t}$ ye haue after your fyrst

wyfe, ye haue wedded this wyfe y$^{t}$ ye now haue. ℈ so ye may y$^{e}$ thyrde ℈ y$^{e}$ fourthe, ℈ neuer shall ye haue of ony of them suche a sone y$^{t}$ shal kepe ℈ saue you from peryll. Themperour sayde truly he shal not dye. Tho sayd y$^{e}$ mayster than do ye wysely, ℈ I commende you to god, ℈ thanke you, y$^{t}$ ye haue this daye for me spared your sone. Themperour sayd I marke this wel y$^{t}$ wy*m*me*n* are crafty, ℈ subtyl, herfore I wyl not for you but for my self saue hy*m*.

## *The Syxte Complaynte of the Empresse.*

Whan that thempresse had knowledge, she shewed her selfe as a wode or an Impacyent body y$^{t}$ all that sawe her or herde her wondred ϒ sayd to themperoor your wyfe she pyneth her self as though she sholde deye. Themperour that heryng went to her ϒ sayd wherfore be ye so heuy, ϒ so impacyent. O lorde how shold I holde it in, whan I am the only doughter of a kyng ϒ your wyfe, ϒ in your company I haue had a grete despyte ϒ shame, and contynually ye haue promysed me to punysshe it, but ye perfourme it not. The emperour sayd, I wote not what I shal do. ye laboure from day to day to haue my sone slayne, and the maysters labour to saue his lyfe. And amonges al thyse I know well that he is my sone, but whether the trouth is that knowe I not. Than sayd she, that is it y$^{t}$ I complayne that ye beleue the maysters more than ye do me.

Therfore it shall happen to you as dyde to a kyng with his stewarde. Than sayd the Emperoure, tell that example, happely it sholde meue me the soner to put my sone to deth. She sayde, gladly, but I praye you gyue attendaunce what I shall saye, and began to tel as hereafter ensueth.

## *The Syxte Example of the Empresse.*

There was a kyng ryght proude ꝛ merueylously dyfformed in his vysage in suche wyse that wȳmen hym hated ꝛ abhorred. This kynge thought Rome to destroye ꝛ the romaynes to slee, ꝛ ye bodyes of Peter ꝛ Poule to take ꝛ cary awaye, whiche while he was in this my*n*de he called to hy*m* his stewarde that was ryght secrete wt hym of his pryue counseyll and sayd to hym. Seke me a fayre woman yt this nyghte may slepe wt me. The stewarde answered, My lorde ye knowe wel your infyrmyte ꝛ dysese, ꝛ yt no woma*n* wyll doo it wtout a grete somme of money. The ky*n*ge sayd, thynke ye yt for money I wyll want one, haue I not golde ꝛ syluer ynough though it were a thousande florenys I sholde it gladle gyue. The stewarde herynge yt was anone smyten wt couetyse, went too his owne wyfe whiche was ryght fayre, chast, ꝛ of a gode kynrede, ꝛ sayde to her, O my good wyfe, my lorde desyreth ꝛ coueyteth fore to slepe wt a fayr ꝛ beauteuouse woman, ꝛ wyll not forbere it, though yt she wold aske of hym a thousande

florenys, and hath commaunded me too puruey hym of one. And therfore I counseyll you that ye to vs gete that money. The wyfe sayde, were it not so that the kynge so proude and foule of vysage were, yet wolde I not to that euyl consente bycause of the synne ayenst god. The stewarde answered, ℈ I consente that ye shal do it, ℈ therto I cou*n*seyl and cōmaunde you, and promyse you w$^{t}$oute that ye co*n*sente to me herin, ye shall neuer haue good daye w$^{t}$ me. She heryng that trembled, in so moche that for drede she consented to hym. The stewarde y$^{t}$ herynge went to the kynge ℈ sayd Syr I haue founde a fayre woman ℈ she is comen of a good house, whiche wil not lesse haue than a thousande florenes ℈ in the euin she shall come, ℈ erly in the morny*n*g she must away that she be not seen of the people. The kynge answered ℈ sayd, I am well content. whan the nyght was comen the stewarde lad his wyfe to y$^{e}$ kynges bed and made faste the dore ℈ yede his waye. Erly in the morny*n*ge the stewarde arose ℈ went vnto y$^{e}$ kynge ℈ sayd. My lord it shall be daye w$^{t}$in a whyle, it is good that ye performe your promise ℈ let the woman go. The kyng sayd this woman pleseth me so well y$^{t}$ so sone she shall not departe from me. whan the stewarde that herde he departed thens al sory. unneth he taryed ony whyle but came to the kynge and sayd. My lorde the mornynge is comen, therfore let the woman goo, leste y$^{t}$ she be ashamed, as I have promysed her. The kyng sayd yet shall she not go from me. ℈ therfore goo out and shet the dore ayen. The stewarde ryght sorowfull departed and wente

vp ⁊ downe with an heuy ⁊ an angry herte, tyll that the fayre ⁊ the clere daye appered, and than entred ayen in to the chamber and sayd. My lorde it is clere daye, suffre that woman to departe that she be not therwith ashamed. The kynge answered/ I saye to you for a trouth she shall not yet departe for her co*m*pany is to me ryght pleasau*n*t ⁊ acceptable. The stewarde y^t^ hery*n*ge coude no lenger forbere ne holde his owne cou*n*seyll, but sayd vnto y^e^ kyng. O my good and gracyous lorde I beseche you suffre her to departe for it is myn owne wyfe. The kynge herynge that sayd to hym. Open y^e^ wyndowe. ⁊ whan it was open, the fayre ⁊ and the bryght day appered. he behelde the woman ryght fayre and goodly. perceyued y^t^ it was y^e^ wyfe of the stewarde ⁊ sayd to hym. O thou moste ⁊ worste rybaude or knaue, why haste thou for so lytell money ashamed ⁊ vndone thy good ⁊ fayre wyfe. ⁊ her vnto me vnwetyngly haste delyuered. Therfore haste y^e^ ⁊ gete the out of my realme ⁊ neuer more herafter come in my syghte, for frome hensforth yf euer I may se the thou shalt dye y^e^ moost shamefull ⁊ horryblest dethe that euer canne be ymagyned. Whan y^e^ stewarde herde y^t^ he fled his waye ⁊ durste not abyde ⁊ was neuer so hardy ony more to come in to that realme. And y^e^ ky*n*ge kepte y^e^ wyfe al hys lyuedayes in grete worshyp, and gaue to hyr plente of all thynges that to her behoued ⁊ appertayned. After that the kynge lete do gadre ⁊ assemble a grete ⁊ a myghty armye ⁊ puyssau*n*ce of men of werre. ⁊ went to Rome with grete myght, ⁊ besyeged

the cyte on all sydes, so long tyll that the Romayns wolde haue delyuered hym for to haue departed and withdrawen hymself from thens the bodyes of the holy apostles Petyr ⁊ Poule. Than was there in ye cyte seuen wyse maysters as ye nowe haue, by the counseyll of whome all the cyte was gyded ⁊ gouerned. And the cytezeyns came too theym and sayd. What shall we do, it behoueth vs as that we delyuere vnto oure dedely ennemyes the bodyes of the holy apostles or elles ye cyte. Tho answered ye fyrste mayster. I shall wt my wysdome ⁊ connynge this day ye cyte ⁊ ye body of the apostles saue. ⁊ so one after another promysed to doo ye same, eueryche of theym for one daye. In lyke wyse as ye maysters haue promysed your sone. wt that ye kynge began to assaute the cyte on all partyes. Tho began ye fyrste mayster to saye, ⁊ to alledge so wysely for to haue pease, yt ye kynge that day lefte his assaute makynge ⁊ withdrewe hym a lytyll fro the cyte. ⁊ soo dyde all the maysters one after an other vnto the laste. To whome came ye burgeyses ⁊ sayd. O mayster ye shall vnderstande that ye kynge hath made his othe ⁊ sworne that to morowe wt al his puyssaunce ⁊ strength he wyll haue ⁊ wynne the cyte. Or elles we muste all be in jeoperdye too lese our lyues. Therfore in aquytynge of your promyse defende ⁊ kepe vs from daunger lyke as all your felowes afore haue done. to that answered ye mayster ⁊ sayd be of good comforte ⁊ fere not, for too morowe I shall by my connynge shewe suche a werke and operacyons / that the kyng with all

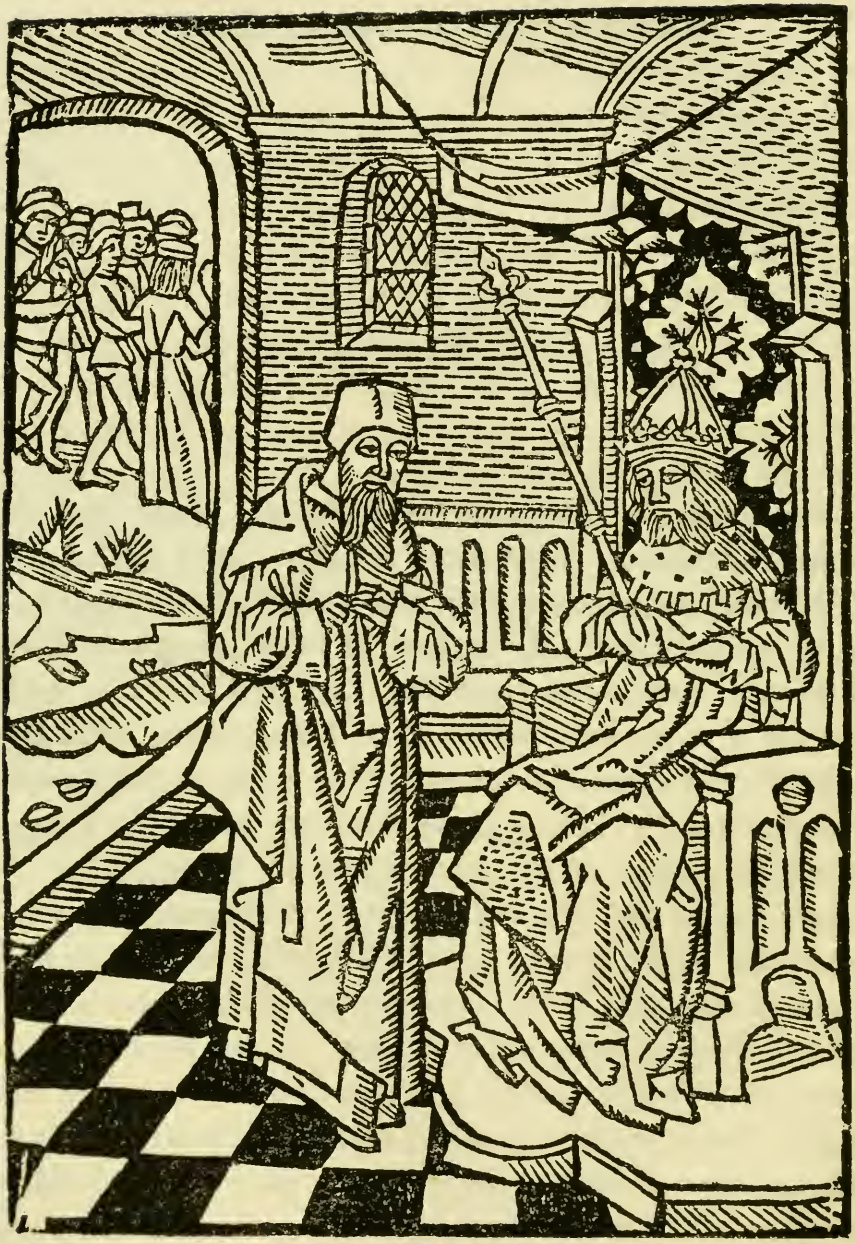
his puissaunce and myght shal fle ꝛ leue the syege. The nexte daye the kynge made ꝛ gaue a grete assaute too the cyte. Tho went the mayster and endued or clothed hymselfe with a meruayvesture or clothynge hauynge therin the fethers or ye tayles of pecockes and of other foules of dyuers coloures. and toke two bryght swerdes in eche hande one. and went there with all and stode vpon the hygheste toure of all the cyte. and began to meue and torne or shewe hymselfe aboute on all partes towarde the oste so that they myght all beholde ꝛ se hym. and he helde in his mouthe the two bryght swerdes yt merueylously shyned. They wtout of ye kynges hoost that seyeng sayd to hym. O lorde beholde vpon hyghest of yonder toure a wonderfull thynge or fygure. Ye I se it wel yt it is merueylous / but what it is I knowe not. They sayd to hym It is Jhesus the god of ye crysten folke yt is come out of heuen vs al to sle ꝛ destroye wt his two swerdes yf wee here ony lenger abyde. The kynge herynge that trembled for fere and sayde what shall we do, there is but one way and that is that we anone go and departe fro hens leste that theyr god auenge hymselfe vpon vs. Tho began ye kynge wt all his oste to fle, notwithstondȳge there was no nede. but yt they of ye mayster were begyled ꝛ deceyued. And whan ye romaynes yt sawe they hastely moued after al armed in good ordynaunce. ꝛ the kynge wt many of his people they kylled and destroyed. ꝛ also in that manere by grete subtylte of ye mayster was ye myghty kynge wt his folke ouercomen. Then sayd thempresse to thempe-

rour, Lorde haue ye vnderstande what I haue sayde. He sayd ye, well in y^e^ beste wyse. She sayd, haue ye no herde what I haue sayd to you at the begynnynge of this narracyon, of the stewarde that the kynge trusted so moche, which for lucre of good shamed his owne wyfe, ℞ he for that was dryuen ℞ banysshed out of the londe. In lyke wyse your sone for the desyre and appetyte that he hath to the empyre, entendeth to co*n*founde and destroye you. But while ye be in your myght ℞ power do with hym as y^e^ kynge did w^t^ his stewarde yf ye wyll not put hym to deth, banysshe him out of your empyre, y^t^ ye without fere may leue in surete of your lyue. And haue ye not also herde how y^e^ kyng lay before y^e^ cyte of Rome, ℞ howe he was by the wyse maysters dec[e]yued ℞ scorned y^t^ he with his folke were kylled ℞ slayne. In the same wyse y^e^ seuen maysters entende to do w^t^ you. ℞ by theyr false wyles and subtyltees to deceyue you, ℞ in the ende to sle you y^t^ your sone may regne. Therupon answered themperour ℞ sayd that shall not so be, for my sone too morowe shal deye. Than commau*n*ded his seruaũtes that they sholde lede his sone to hangynge. And as the folke herde that there was a grete noyse ℞ a gaderynge of theym and bewayled the dethe of y^e^ only sone of themperour. And as y^e^ syxte mayster herde that, he hasted hym too the Emperour ℞ salued hym moche honourably. ℞ he toke it vntha*n*kfully, ℞ thretned hym or menaced him to dye w^t^ his sone for that he was w^t^ them made dompe, and a rybaude, y^e^ whiche he had shewed vpon his wyfe.

The mayster sayd. I haue deserued no deth w$^{t}$ your sone, but grete ☞ large gyftes, for he is not dompe as ye shall here w$^{t}$in thre dayes yf he may lyue soo longe. and yf ye put hym too deth for wordes of your wyfe, than shall I merueyll of your wysdome. ☞ without doute it shall happen to you as it somtyme happened to a knyght that so moche alowed the saynges of his wyfe that he was bounde to an horse tayle ☞ drawen thrugh out all the cyte to the galowes. Themperour sayde for the loue of god shewe me that example that I may the better beware of that peryl. That wyl I not doo sayd the mayster, w$^{t}$out ye do cal ayen your sone. Than themperour commaunded to call his sone. And the mayster began afore al the folke to tel in this maner folowynge.

## *The Example of the Syxte Mayster.*

There was an Emperour of Rome the whiche had thre knyghtes whom he loued aboue al other. And in that same cyte was an au*n*cyent knyght y$^{t}$ had wedded a fayre yonge wyfe as ye do thempres whiche aboue al other thy*n*ges he loued. This lady coude synge ryht wel, ⁊ melodyously ⁊ w$^{t}$ suche swetnes y$^{t}$ many drewe to her house ⁊ desyred her company / It befell vpo*n* a season as she sate in her house, y$^{e}$ vysage torned in to the strete y$^{t}$ she myght se them that we*n*t by. ⁊ began swetely tu synge, y$^{t}$ all folke delyted for to here her. By chaunce came that wayes a knyght of y$^{e}$ Emperours courte ⁊ herde that voyce, lyft vp his eyē ⁊ behelde her Intentyfly ⁊ anone he was taken in her loue, and entred in to her house ⁊ fyll in communycacyon w$^{t}$ her of loue. ⁊ amonges al other he demau*n*ded what he sholde gyue her too slepe by hym one nyght. She answered an hondred floreyns. The knyght sayde, tell me whan I shall come, ⁊ I shall gyue you an hondred floreyns. She sayd whan I may haue a conuenyent tyme I



shal sende for you. The nexte day she sange ayen in the same place, and it fortuned the seco*n*de knyght of themperour to come by that same way, the whiche in lykewyse was smyten in her loue, ¶ also p*ro*mysed her an hondred floreyns. To whom also she promysed to shewe hym a tyme prouyded. The thyrd day was the thyrd knyght in lyke wyse caught in her loue, the whiche also promysed an ho*n*dred floreyns, ¶ she too gyue hym knowelege of the tyme. Thyse thre knyghtes haue so secretly spoken with that lady y^t^ none of them had knowlege of other. The lady y^t^ was of malyce ¶ cautelous replenysshed, came to her husbonde ¶ sayd. syr I haue secrete maters too shewe you, ¶ folowe therein my counseyll yf ye do it, our necessite or pouerte ye may largely releue. The knyght sayd tel it me I shal holde it secrete ¶ fulfyl it to my power. She sayde thre knyghtes of thēperours court haue ben w^t^ me one after an other in suche wyse y^t^ none knoweth of an other counseyll. ¶ euery of them haue offred me an hondred floreyns, myght we y^e^ thre c florayns gete ¶ no knowlege therof be had sholde it not be to vs a grete helpe ¶ our pouerte well releued. The knyght sayd, forsoth yes, ¶ therfore what someuer ye cou*n*seyl me to do I shall folowe it. Tho sayd she, I shall gyue you this counseyll. whan they come with the floreyns ye shall stande behynde y^e^ yate w^t^ your swerde drawen in your hande. ¶ bycause y^t^ euery of them comethe alone, ye shall sle one after another. ¶ so we shal haue the three c floreyns of them without knowlege of ony other. The knyght answered.

O my best beloued wif I fere me that this euyll can notte be hydde, and we sholde therfore shamefully suffre dethe yf that it were knowen. She sayd I shall this werke begynne. ℈ I shall make therof a good ende, and fere it not. wha*n* the knyght sawe that she was so hardy it caused hym to be the more bolde. and she sent for the fyrst knyght and he came to hyr anone with oute ony taryenge to the yate ℈ knocked. ℈ she askyd yf he brought y^e^ c floreyns. and he sayd ye, I haue theym here all redy. Tho lete she hy*m* in. ℈ anone at y^e^ entrynge in, her husbonde kylled hym ℈ so he dyde y^e^ seconde ℈ the thyrde ℈ in to one secrete chamber they drewe the bodyes of them. Whan it was thus done y^e^ knyght sayd to his lady. O dere wyfe yf thyse bodyes be founde w^t^ vs, we shall dye y^e^ moost shamefull deth y^t^ can be ymagyned for it is not possyble but y^t^ thyse knyghtes shall be myssed in themperours courte. ℈ grete serche ℈ Inquysyon shall be for them made thrugh all this cyte, where they are become. She sayde, Syr I haue this werke begonne, ℈ shal make therof a good ende, fere not, as I afore sayd. This lady had a brother the whiche had the gouernau*n*ce of the watche of y^e^ cyte that on y^e^ nyghtis vpon stretes watched w^t^ his felowes. She stode at her gate ℈ called her brother ℈ sayde. O my best brod^r^ I haue a secrete mater the whiche in co*n*fessyon I shal shewe you. ℈ therfore come a lytyll with*in*. ℈ whan y^t^ he was come in, the knyght receyued hym frendly ℈ gaue hym wyne to drynke. ℈ sayd, my well beloued broder, this is y^e^ cause y^t^ I haue called you, for of your cou*n*seyll

I haue moche nede. The broder answered say it boldely to me, ¶ what someuer y$^{t}$ I may do, to my power, y$^{t}$ shall be at your desyre w$^{t}$out letty*n*ge. Tho sayd she, yesterdaye came in a knyght in good frendshyp / but afterwarde he fyll in suche wordes ¶ varyaunce w$^{t}$ my husbonde, y$^{t}$ he slewe hym, ¶ lyeth in my chamber. ¶ myn owne dere broder we haue noo man that we may truste but you. ¶ yf y$^{e}$ body were fou*n*de by vs we sholde dye. ¶ she made mencyon but of one. y$^{e}$ brother sayd delyuer it me in a sacke ¶ I shall bere hy*m* to y$^{e}$ see. she herynge y$^{t}$ was full glad thereof, ¶ delyuered to hy*m* the body of y$^{e}$ fyrste knyght. he toke it ¶ went w$^{t}$all a good pase ¶ cast it therin. ¶ as this was done, he came ayen to his syster ¶ sayde, gyue me nowe of the beste wyne for ye are of hym quyte. ¶ she thanked hy*m* ¶ went in to as though she had gone for wyne and began to crye w$^{t}$ an hygh voyce, y$^{e}$ knyghte that was caste in to the see is come ayen. As her brother y$^{t}$ herde he wondred sore, ¶ sayde gyue me hym. I shall se yf he shall aryse ayen. ¶ toke the body of the seconde knyght ¶ wende it had ben of the fyrst knyght ¶ went to the see, ¶ w$^{t}$ a grete stone drowned hym therin. y$^{t}$ done, went ayen vnto his systers house ¶ sayde, nowe fyll me a cuppe with good wyne, for I haue drowned hym so depe y$^{t}$ he shall neuer come ayen. she sayd thanked be god ¶ went ayen too her chamber ¶ fayned her to fetche wyne. ¶ cryed with a grete voyce. Alas wo be to me he is rysen ayen and come out of y$^{e}$ see. ¶ as her brother herde that with grete meruaylle sayd. what deuyll is this knyght that I haue thus caste

in to y^e^ water ⁊ notwithstandynge is comen ayen. Delyuer hy*m* me y^e^ thyrde tyme, ⁊ I shall se yf he shall come ayen. Tho gaue she hym y^e^ thyrde knxght *(sic)*, whiche he byleued had ben y^e^ fyrste knyght, ⁊ yede w^t^oute ye cyte to a grete foreste ⁊ made a grete fyre ⁊ caste the knyght therin. ⁊ whan he was almost brente, y^e^ brod^r^ went thens a lytel dystau*n*ce to do his nede. Tho came there a knyght y^t^ wolde ryde to y^e^ cyte where on y^e^ morny*n*ge they sholde haue a tourneye ⁊ a Justy*n*g. ⁊ it was colde weder ⁊ derke, ⁊ was not fer fro y^e^ cyte. As y^t^ he had a syght of that fyre drewe therto ⁊ alyghted from his horse ⁊ warmed hy*m*. The waker came ⁊ sayd to hy*m* what arte y^u^. The knyght sayd I am a gentyl knyghte. Tho spake y^e^ waker ⁊ sayd, y^u^ arte no knyght but a deuyll for fyrste I caste y^e^ in to the water, the ii tyme w^t^ a grete stone I drowned the, ⁊ the iii tyme I haue put y^e^ in this fyre supposynge y^t^ y^u^ haddest be brente. ⁊ yet y^u^ standest here. ⁊ tho he toke y^e^ knyght w^t^ his hors ⁊ cast them both in to the fyre. ⁊ after y^t^ he went aye*n* to his syster ⁊ tolde what had hapned hy*m*. Nowe bry*n*ge me of y^e^ beste wyne, for after y^t^ I had brente hym I fou*n*de hym ayen by y^e^ fyre w^t^ his horse, ⁊ I haue caste them both in the fyre. ⁊ his syster perceyued well y^t^ he had brent a knyght of the tourney whiche anone broughte hy*m* of y^e^ best wyne habu*n*dau*n*tly. ⁊ after he had wel dronken he went thens. Not longe tyme after that there fyll a grete debate ⁊ co*n*tencō betwyx the knyghte ⁊ his wyfe, in such wyse y^t^ he smote her. which had indygnacyon therof ⁊ waxed angry ⁊ sayd that many

myght here it, O wretche wyll ye kylle me as ye haue done the thre knyghts of themperours. men y^t^ herynge layde handes on them, ⁊ brought them before y^e^ emperour ⁊ y^e^ woman anone knowleged y^t^ hyr husbonde had slayne the thre knyghtes of themperours ⁊ how he toke fro them thre hondred floreyns ⁊ as it was thus in trouth fou*n*de, bothe were drawen atte an horse tayll and hanged vppon the galowes. Than sayd y^e^ mayster to themperour, haue ye vnderstande what I haue sayd. He answered ryghte well. I saye for certayne that wyfe was y^e^ worste woman that myght be of all wymme*n*, for she moued ⁊ styred hy*m* to murdre, ⁊ afterwarde dyscouered hym. The mayster sayd, It is w^t^oute doubte y^t^ it shall to you happen worse yf ye put to deth your sone by y^e^ aduyse of your wyfe. Themperour sayd, my sone shall not dye this day. The mayster y^t^ herynge yaue thankynges to themperour, and toke leue ⁊ went his waye.

## *The Seuenth Complaynte of the Empresse.*

Whan the empresse herde y$^{t}$ the sone of themperour was yet lyuynge, as a mad woman she ranne to themperour wepynge ℞ cryenge. O vnhappy wyfe what shall I doo. alas alas for I muste nedes sle myselfe y$^{t}$ so am ashamed ℞ no punysshement there vpon done. Themperour answered, God defende you suche thy*n*ges to haue in mynde, but suffer a whyle, ℞ ye shall haue a good ende in your cause. She answered, Syr y$^{r}$ ende shall be euyll, for of y$^{t}$ shal folowe to you grete co*n*fusyon ℞ to me. Themperour sayd, be styl of such thy*n*ges. She sayd, Lorde it shall come to you ℞ your sone as it happened to a kynge ℞ to his stewarde. Themperour sayd I praye you tell me that example. She sayde I wyll gladly tell it, but I fere me that ye wyl here me no more, for y$^{e}$ next day y$^{e}$ seue*n*th mayster shal speke ℞ saue your sone from y$^{e}$ deth as his felowes haue done. The seconde day after this then your sone shal speke, of whoos wordes ye shal haue ℞ take svche joy ℞ delectacyon y$^{t}$ the loue betwyxte vs shall bee holy forgeten ℞

washshed away. Themperour sayd that is Impossyble to me, for I shal neuer your loue forgete. Tho sayd she, O my best beloued lorde, please it you I shal tel you one example, by y^e^ whiche ye shall beware before of many perylles in tyme comynge, ꝛ specyally of your cursed sone, whiche entendeth to destroy me by his maysters. The emperour sayd, tell on your example. and the Empresse began to tell in this wyse ensuynge.

## *The Seuenth Example of the Empresse.*

There was somtyme a kyng, the whiche loued his wyfe aboue all thynge. in so moche that he closed her in a stronge castell, ℈ bare y^e^ keyes of the castel hymselfe. The lady was therfore ryght heuy ℈ desolate. Now in ferre partyes there was a valyaunte knyght y^e^ whiche in a nyght had a dreme after this effecte. For he thought that he sawe one of the fayreste quenes y^t^ myght be. y^e^ which aboue all thynges desyred to haue her loue. y^t^ yf he myghte se her walkynge he sholde clerely haue knowlege of, by whome to hym grete frendshyp ℈ worship sholde come. To y^e^ quene in y^e^ same nyght by vysyon of the sayd knyght, it was to her also shewed. ℈ yet they hadde of eche other neyther knowlege of name neyther of fame. whan y^e^ knyght had thus dremed ℈ seen in his slepe, he thought ℈ determyned in his mynde that his fote sholde not reste vnto y^e^ tyme tyll he had founde that lady, y^t^ to hym was shewed in his vysyon. and lepte vpon his horse / and toke with hym all that to hym was necessarye for his

journey. and rode and laboured thrughe dyuerse regyons and londes soo longe tyll at the last he came vnto the same londe, where that the quene was by her husbonde closed or kepte in a stronge castel. And wha*n* this sayd knyght was come in to y^e^ same cyte, and by a certayne season had there soiourned, it happened on a day as this knyght walked by the castell, and knewe not y^t^ y^e^ quene was therin she sate in a wy*n*dowe to beholde ⁊ see y^e^ people goynge by. ⁊ amonge all other she sawe the sayd knyght, and knewe that he was the same man that she had dremed of. And y^e^ knyght by chaunce lyfte vp his eyen ⁊ perceyued y^e^ lady syttyng in the wyndowe. ⁊ anone his minde shewed hym y^t^ it was she y^t^ he the dremes of had. ⁊ he began to synge a songe of loue. And as she herde y^t^ she was anone taken w^t^ his loue. The knyghte from thensforth dayly went ⁊ walked aboute y^e^ castell beholdynge it ouer all y^t^ yf in ony maner wyse he myght gete to her too shewe his mynde. The lady perceyuy*n*ge that she wrote a letter ⁊ cast it downe to hym. And whan he had sene ouer y^e^ letter, ⁊ understode y^e^ wyll of that lady, he began to haunte Joustes ⁊ tournamentes ⁊ dyde so many gret ⁊ merueylous actes or dedes, that y^e^ name of hym came to the kynge. And as the kynge herde that he sent after hym ⁊ sayd to hym, Syr knyght I haue herde moche honour of you. yf it wyll please you for to abyde ⁊ to dwell w^t^ vs, we shall gyue you large gyftes ⁊ rewardes. The knyght answerd, O ryght myg[h]ty prynce I am your seruaunte, wolde god y^t^ I coude do ony seruyse to

please your magnyfycence, w$^{t}$out takynge of rewarde saue one thyng afore all other I desyre. The kynge sayd, shewe it boldely what thynge y$^{t}$ it is. The knyght sayd, My lorde sythen y$^{t}$ it hath pleased you for to take me as your seruau*n*t ⁊ one of youre counseyll, me semeth that it were expedyent for bothe our solaces, that I hadde a place nyghe too the wall of the castell: that I myght at all tymes be the more redy at your callynge whan that ye haue nede. Theñe the kynge sayd I consente it to you make it as ye thy*n*ke it beste. Tho wente the knyght ⁊ hyred werkeme*n* ⁊ made a fayre logynge by y$^{e}$ walles of y$^{e}$ toure. ⁊ wha*n* it was all redy, He made a couenau*n*t w$^{t}$ a werkeman for to make out of his house a secret way in to y$^{e}$ tour ⁊ whan it was made redy after his entente, he kylled y$^{e}$ werkeman by cause he sholde not dyscouer. ⁊ went in to y$^{e}$ quene ⁊ dyde to her reuerence accordy*n*g ⁊ they talked of many thynges, y$^{t}$ at thende he desyred for to slẽpe by her, which she oftentymes denyed, but neuery$^{e}$les she co*n*sented to hy*m*. After y$^{t}$ y$^{e}$ quene thought what shall I do, yf I sholde gyue knowlege herof vnto my husbo*n*d, therof sholde come two euyls y$^{e}$ one is my shame, ⁊ y$^{t}$ by auenture he sho[l]de vtterly forsake me ⁊ dryue me out of his londe for euer, ⁊ y$^{e}$ knyght he sholde sle, for fro y$^{e}$ dethe he coude not escape, ⁊ therfore it is better y$^{t}$ I be styll ⁊ tell not. The knyght after y$^{t}$ as oftentymes as it pleased hym he went in to the quene, ⁊ dyde his wyll with her. And she gaue hym a rynge the whiche y$^{e}$ kyng had gyuen vnto her at theyr weddynge. This knyght in euery

batayll and tournamēt hadde the vyctory wherfore he was and stode in grete fauour with the kynge insomoche that he made hy*m* his stewarde ¶ gouernoure of al his Regyon ¶ lond. ¶ It happened vppon a daye that the kynge dysposed hym selfe for too goo too chase or huntynge, and he commaunded his stewarde for too make hym redy vppon the morowe for too goo with hym, whertoo he offred hym selfe all redy. ¶ And on the morowe after they entred in to y^e^ forest, ¶ all that daye they chased, ¶ folowed y^e^ wylde bestes that they were so wery that y^e^ kynge by a fontayne sate hy*m* downe to reste. ¶ y^e^ knyghte by y^e^ kynge, ¶ fyll on slepe by hym, hauynge y^e^ ry*n*ge vpon his fynger, y^e^ whiche the kynge marked ¶ knewe. After y^t^ the knyght perceyued y^t^ the kynge had sene the rynge, fayned hymself seke ¶ sayd, My lorde I fele my selfe sore seke ¶ yf I fynde not hastely remedy therfore by the meanes [of] physyke I am but a dede ma*n* ¶ therfore I pray you lycence me to go home. To whome he sayd, go my dere frend in goddes name. he anone gate on his horse ¶ hasted hy*m* to his house, ¶ wente to the quene ¶ gave her ayen y^e^ rynge, ¶ tolde her how y^e^ kynge had marked it ¶ sene it on his fynger, ¶ prayed her yf he made ony questyons of y^e^ rynge y^t^ [s]he sholde shewe it to hy*m*. This done, he went downe ayen to his lodgy*n*ge. And anone after y^t^ the kynge came to the quene ¶ she receyued hym ryght louy*n*gly, ¶ after y^t^ a lytyl tyme was passed, the kyng sayd, My lady shew me where y^e^ ryng is that I gaue to you, I desyre to se it. O my lorde to what entente at this tyme

desyre ye to se it. Than sayd he, yf ye shewe it not to me Inco*n*tyne*n*t it shall repente you. She rose anone vp ⁊ went to [her] cheste ⁊ brought the ry*n*ge to y^e^ kynge. And as he sawe y^e^ rynge he was half ashamed, ⁊ sayd vnto her, O howe lyke is the knyghtes rynge vnto this rynge, whyche I sawe vpon his fynger, and I bileued that it had ben my rynge, and therfore it was that I asked it of you so hastely after the rynge. And of this euyll suspecyon I yelde my selfe gylty ayenst you my dere lady, in this behalfe, for y^e^ strength of the toure deceyued me, for I thy*n*ke y^t^ noo man myght come therin, but I myself alone. She sayde, My dere lorde, wond^r^ not for one rynge is lyke an other, for werke men make seldome ony werke, but y^e^ other make the same. but god forgyue it you that ye haue had me suspect whan ye knowe the strength of y^e^ toure, ⁊ the keyes ye haue alway by you, ⁊ byleue no man therw^t^. After y^t^ the knyght lete ordeyn̄ a grete dyner ⁊ sayd to the ky*n*ge, my lorde it is so that my lady in loue is come out of my countre ⁊ I haue done to be made a feste or a dyner. ⁊ gladly I wolde pray you that at this tyme ye wyll doo me honour, ⁊ take suche mete as is in my house. The kynge sayd I shal gladly do you y^t^ worshypp ⁊ more. The knight was therof glad, ⁊ by his secrete way went to the quene ⁊ sayd to her, My lady this day ye shal come to my house by my preuy way, ⁊ clothe you in ryche clothynge after the way of my cou*n*tre, ⁊ ye shal syt at the table w^t^ the kynge as my souerayne lady, ⁊ make hy*m* good there. She sayd as ye wyll I shall it all thȳges

fulfyll. ¶ whan the houre of mete was come, ¶ the ky*n*ge from the castell was comyng towardes the knyghtes house, In the meane tyme the quene entred by the secrete way in to the knyghtes lodgynge ¶ apparayled her after the maner of the knyghtes countre. and whan the kynge was entred in to the house, she salued hym reuerently and receyued hym. and whan the kynge hadde beholden her he demaunded of the knyghte, what woman is this that is so fayr. Then y^e^ knyght sayd my lorde it is my souerayne lady that now is come out of my cou*n*tre after me. I haue taryed longe in her seruyte. Then the knyght set the kynge att y^e^ table as it behoued. ¶ made the quene to syt by hym / ¶ the kynge thoughte that it was his quene, and sayd w^t^in hymself, O how lyke is this woman vnto my wyfe. So y^e^ strength of the toure deceyued hym, that he gaue more fayth and credence to y^e^ knyghtes wordes than he dyde vnto his owne eyen. The quene begañe for to speke ¶ talke vnto the kynge and to styre hym for to ete and drynke ¶ to make good chere. And wha*n* as the kynge herde her voyce and speche than he sayd to hymselfe, O blessed lady, lyke is this woman vnto my quene, in her behauyng / in speche / in vysage / ¶ in all other thy*n*ges ¶ condycyons. and alwayes y^e^ strengthe of the toure fayled hym. In the ende of y^e^ mete, y^e^ knyghte prayed his loue to synge a songe afore y^e^ kyng the whiche began for to synge a songe of loue. whan as he herde that ¶ knewe her voyce, he thought is not this my wyfe. How may it be she. haue not I the keyes of y^e^ toure my selfe in

kepynge. and soo all the mete tyme he sate and strofe within hymselfe. Tho att the laste he sayde vnto the knyght that he sholde take vp the table for he hadde somwhat for too done for why that he sate in suche a grete thought, and aduysemēt. The knyght answered and sayde, My lorde ye make noo good chere, ye are full of thoughtes. And yf it please you we shall make to you more sporte ℈ solace. And the woman sayd please it you syr kynge here by vs tarye. we shall make you all the sporte ℈ solace that we can, lyke as y^e^ quene is in her solace ℈ conforte. He sayd take away the table, for I may no lenger abyde. Then the knyght at the commaundement of y^e^ kynge toke vp the table, ℈ thanked theym all. And y^e^ kynge wente hastely vnto the castell in serchynge whether y^t^ the quene were w^t^in or not. And in the meane whyle the quene went vp by her preuy way, ℈ put of her vppermost vestures ℈ the kynge founde her in the same clothynge that he lefte her afore. Whan as the kynge was entred ℈ so founde her, he embraced ℈ kyssed her ℈ sayd vnto her. This day I haue eten w^t^ my knyghte and w^t^ his loue that is come out of his cou*n*-tree. and sythen I was borne vnto this day myn eyen hath not sene two so lyke creatures in al thyng as she is to you and this mete tyme I haue be soo moche styred with dyuerse thy*n*ges y^t^ I coude no lenger abyde there, but y^t^ I muste come ℈ serche whether ye were here or theyre. Tho sayd ye quene, Syr how myght ye thynke y^t^, for ye knowe well y^t^ this toure is fast, ℈ stronge ynoughe ℈ that no body can come in nor out w^t^out

you, for ye alone haue alwayes the keye. How were it then possyble for me to be there. Ye fynde somtyme one man lyke on other and therfore ye sholde take none argumētes of mysdemyng or of suspycion, as ye late dyde of the rynge. The kynge sayd, that is true and therfore I knowlege my selfe gylty that I haue mysdemed you. After that came to hym y^e^ knyght ꝛ sayd, My lorde I haue of long tyme serued your good grace, and now it is tyme that I retourne ayen in to my countre ꝛ therfore for all the seruyce y^t^ I haue done vnto you I desyre of you but one thynge to do for me. y^t^ my lorde y^e^ whiche I entende to wedde in the face of the chyrche, which hath folowed me out of ferre countrees, ꝛ her I shall brynge thyder ayen as my laweful wyfe. Therfore I beseche and praye your noble grace that ye wyll do me this honour, that by your owne honde ye wyll gyue her afore the preest vnto me, the whiche shallbe vnto me greete honour and worshyp whan I come into my countree. The kynge answered, y^t^ petycyon and more yf ye desyre it that shall I gladly doo and fulfyll it. The knyght prefyxed the daye of maryage. To the whiche daye this good kynge came to the chyrche worshypfully. The preest was redy ꝛ stode indued w^t^ his vestymentes for to solemnyse the matrymonye. The knyght had the quene all redy apparayled in his owne house after his maner ꝛ had ordeyned two knyghtes for to lede her to the chyrche, they byleuynge that it had ben his paramour. And whan they were before in the face of y^e^ chyrche y^e^ preest sayd, who shall gyue this woman vnto this

knyght. Then the kynge sayd, I shall gyue her to myn owne knyght. and toke her by the hande ⁊ sayd vnto her, O good woman ye are moche lyke vnto my quene, and therfore I loue you the better, and also for that ye be my knyghtes wyfe and shall be of my house. and putte the quenes hande in to ye knyghtes hand. and ye preest afte ye maner of the chyrche hath bounde ⁊ wedded them togyder. and whan all this was fynysshed ⁊ done the knyghte sayd vnto ye kyng, Syr my shyp yt I entende to go in towardes my countre is all redy to make sayle wherfore I humbly beseche hyghly your moost noble grace that it wyl please you for to accompany my wy[fe] therunto ⁊ that ye wyll aduertyse ⁊ enfourme her * that she loue me ⁊ haue me in fauoure aboue all other creatures lyuynge, and the rather for your gode excytacyon ⁊ doctryne. Thenne the kynge with a grete multytude of people went with theym ⁊ accompanyed theym vnto the shyppe of whoos departynge many of them were dolaunte to the shyppe. the kynge began to say vnto the quene, my moost dere frende, herken now well vnto my counseyll and folowe it, for it shall be for your honour ⁊ proufyte. My knyght hath now here wedded ⁊ done to you al ye worshypp yt in hym is. wherfore loke yt ye loue ⁊ honour hym aboue all erthly creatures ⁊ yt hath god commaunded ⁊ that ye be too hym true ⁊ obedyent. ⁊ as this was sayd he delyuered her vnto ye knyght saynge my

* The last seven words are repeated in the original.

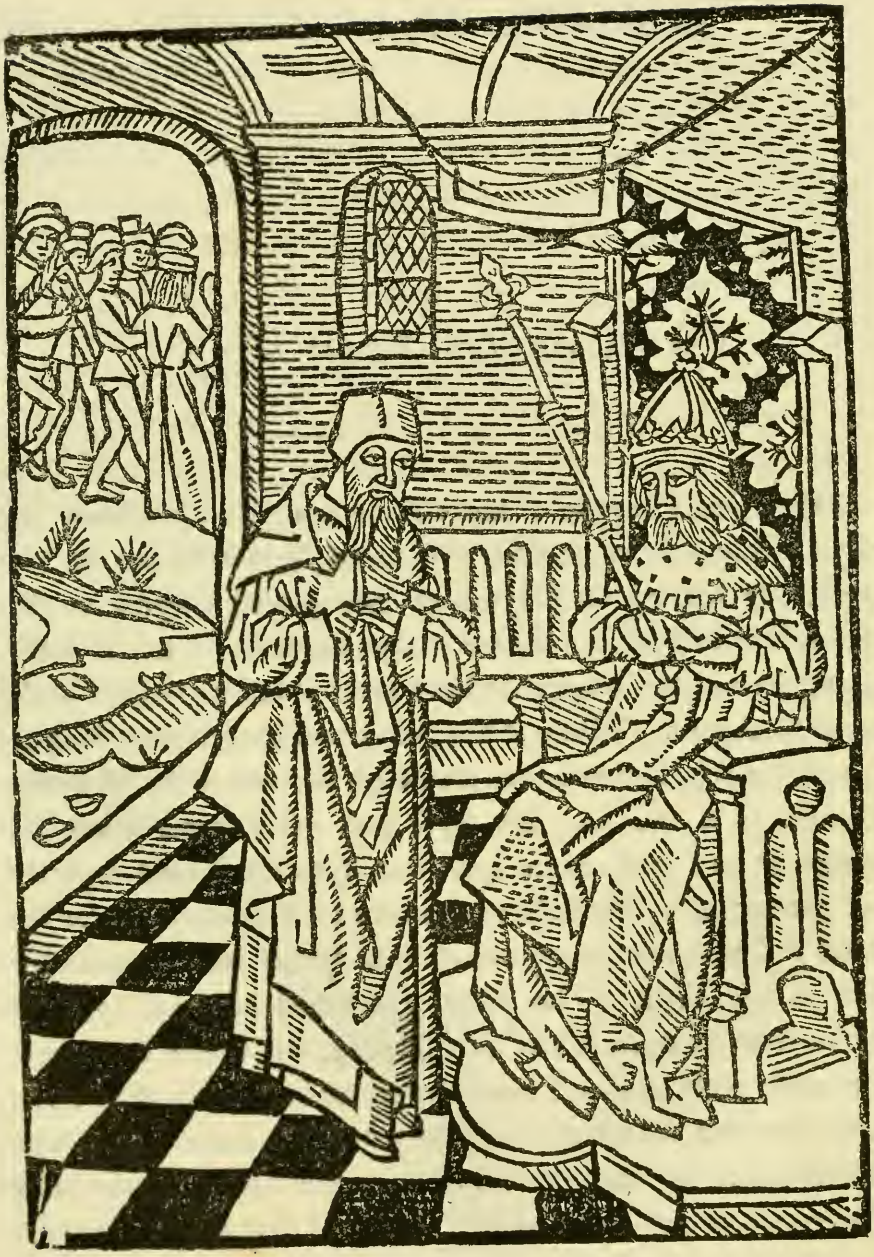
blessyng go w$^{t}$ you both, ℈ our lorde kepe ℈ conduyte you in sauete to your cou*n*tre. The*n* the knyght and the quene bowed and enclyned dow$\bar{n}$ her hedes vnto y$^{e}$ kynge. ℈ thanked hym of all thyngs and they commytted hym to god and entred in to the shyppe and the maryners haled up the sayles and sayled forth afore the wynde soo that w$^{t}$in a short tyme the kyng had lost y$^{e}$ syght of the shyp. And from the*n*s he went hastely to y$^{e}$ castell ℈ myssed the quene. ℈ wha*n* he founde her not / he was meued in all the partes of his body. ℈ sought all about y$^{e}$ toure and serched, tyll at laste he founde y$^{e}$ hole or y$^{e}$ secrete way y$^{t}$ the knyght had made. ℈ as he saw that, than cryed he and weped and sayd, Alas alas this knyght in whom I hadde so grete confydence ℈ truste hath taken away my wyfe, was I not a fole y$^{t}$ I gaue more fayth in to his words then I dyde to myne owne eyen. Than sayd thempresse, My lorde haue ye vnderstand what I haue sayde. Themperour sayd ryght wel in y$^{e}$ best wyse. Then sayd thempresse, remember how y$^{t}$ he trusted the knyghte ℈ yet he deceyued hy*m*. In the same manere wyse ye haue confydence in the seuen wyse maysters / and they laboure for to destroye me that am your wyfe. ℈ ye gyue more fayth vnto theyr wordes than ye do vnto your owne eyen. for ye haue well sene how y$^{t}$ youre sone rente and scratched me. Wherof yet I bere and haue the tokens ℈ the markes as ye may see. And also ye knowe well how that your cursed sone hath me ashamed ℈ ye marke not howe they defende hym in his foly and falshede. Therfore it is to be

dradde y$^{t}$ it shall happen to you as it dyde to the kynge that too you I haue spoken of. Themperour sayd, I byleue myn eyen better than theyr wordes. ℸ therfore I say you y$^{t}$ to morowe I shall do justyce of hym. On y$^{e}$ morowe the Emperour commaunded that his sone sholde be hanged. Tho began ayen a grete noyse in and [bewailing amongst the common people for the death of the Emperor's only son. At last when the seventh master heard it, he ran immediately unto the officers, which were leading him to the gallows, and said: My friends, I pray you not to make overmuch haste but stay your hands a while, for I think this day (with the help of the Almighty God) to save him from all perils; and from thence the master hasteth himself to the Emperor's Palace, and did him reverence according to his accustomed duty. But the Emperor with great indignation made him this answer: Never more have you any joy in this world, for that you have sent my son home untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well speaking, for which cause you shall all be put to death with him. The master answered: O most noble Emperor, the time is not long betwixt this and tomorrow noon; then (by the grace of God) you shall hear him speak discreetly, and shall declare the truth of all things, and this I promise you he will perform to the full, upon pain of my life, if you will spare him so long a time; if you find it not so, then take my life and the lives of us all. Then said the Emperor: If I might but hear my son speak, it would give me

sufficient content, and I would not desire longer to live. Then answered the master: All this and more you shall hear and see, and confess it to be true, if you will but abide this little time: and then the strife that hath been betwixt us and the Empress will clearly be decided. And if you suffer him to be put to death through the words of your most ungodly wife, I tell you of a truth it shall happen worse to you than it did to a knight that died for a little blood that he saw his wife to bleed, to whom afterwards she was most unnatural. Then said the Emperor: That example I would fain hear. Then said the master: Let your son be called again, and I shall tell you so notable an example that during your life you may beware of the unsteadfastness of woman. Then the Emperor said: I shall go call my son again upon condition that to-morrow I shall hear him speak as you have promised. The master said: Do that, my lord, for it shall so be. And began to tell as followeth.]

## *The Example of the Seuenth Mayster.*

There was a knyght y$^{t}$ had a fayre yonge wyfe whome he entyrely loued in so moche that he coude not be out of her syght. It hapned on a tyme y$^{t}$ they played togyder at the chesse, ℈ y$^{e}$ knyght by chau*n*ce helde a knyfe in his hande ℈ she playng fortuned to smyte her hand vpon y$^{e}$ knyf, y$^{t}$ a lytel blode began to appere. Whan y$^{e}$ knyght sawe that his wyfe bled he sorowed moche and was sore aferde of his wyfe y$^{t}$ he fel to the grounde in a swoune. his wyfe cast colde water vpon his vysage, y$^{t}$ he a lytell came ayen too hymselfe ℈ sayd lyghtely call the curate w$^{t}$ the holy sacramente for I muste deye for the blood y$^{t}$ I haue seen come out of your fy*n*ger hath smyten the deth to my herte. The preest came and houseled hym. ℈ anone after he dyed w$^{t}$out ony taryeng, for whoos deth there was made grete sorowe ℈ bewaylyn*g*es and specyally of y$^{e}$ wyfe. And after that the obsequyes ℈ buryenge was done accordynge she went and lay vpon the buryel or graue and there she made the gretest sorowe of the worlde, and sayd that she wolde neuer



departe from thens, but as a turtyll douue she wolde for the loue of her husbonde there abyde ꝛ dye. Tho went her fren[ds] vnto her and sayd what auayleth this for his soule to lyue ꝛ dye here, it is better yᵗ ye go to your house ꝛ gyue almes for yᵉ loue of god ꝛ yᵗ shal more auayle his soule, than in this place to abyde. To whom she answerd be styll ye are euyll coun*se*lours. Co*n*syder not ye how I am fro hy*m* seperate ꝛ departed by his deth for a lytell blode yᵗ he sawe com out of my ho*n*d or fy*n*ger, ꝛ therfore I shall neuer fro hens departe. Her frendes hery*n*ge yᵗ lete make a lytell house or lodgynge nygh vnto yᵉ graue, ꝛ put therin all thynges yᵗ to her was necessarye ꝛ went theyr wayes thy*n*kynge that within a whyle she sholde be wery to be alone, ꝛ so desolate from all company ꝛ yᵗ therby she sholde desyre ayen yᵉ company of people. In yᵗ cyte was thenne a lawes (*sic*) yᵗ whan a trespassour or offendour ayenst the lawe were hanged, yᵗ yᵉ shyryf all yᵗ nyght sholde watche ꝛ kepe the body all armed, ꝛ yf it hapned yᵗ the body of hym hanged were stolen away, yᵉ seryf sholde lese all his londe, ꝛ his lyfe at yᵉ kynges pleasure. It hapned sone after yᵗ the knyghte was dede a man to be hanged for trepasse that he had done, so that yᵉ sheryf after yᵉ lawe of the londe all the nyght watched by yᵉ galowes yᵗ was not fer fro yᵉ cyte, ꝛ yᵉ chyrcheyerde was not ferre from the walles of yᵉ same. Tho became yᵉ sheryf so colde yᵗ he wyst not but to dye for colde, wᵗout the rather yᵗ he myghte warme hym. it was so feruent a colde ꝛ so stronge a froste, and he behelde fro thens about hym ꝛ sawe yᵉ fyre in yᵉ

chyrcheyerde, ꝛ hasted hym ꝛ came therto, ꝛ whan he was come he called ꝛ knocked at the lytyll house. The woman spake who is that yᵗ at this houre is knockynge at yᵉ house of this sorowfull woman. I am yᵉ shyref that so moche colde suffreth yᵗ wᵗout anone yᵉ late me in I shall frese to deth. She sayd, I fere me yf that I lete you come in ye sholde shewe me such wordes yᵗ sholde cause me for to be more heuyer. ꝛ he sayd I promyse vnto you yᵗ I shall saye no wordes to your dyspleasure. Then lete she hym in. and whan he awhyle had sytten by yᵉ fyre ꝛ was well warmed he sayd to her, O fayre woman wᵗ your lycence wolde I fayne speke but one worde vnto you. She answered to hym, syr say what it pleaseth you. He sayd, O lady ye be a fayr gentyl woman ryche ꝛ yonge. were it not better ꝛ more conuenyent for you to dwell at home in your house ꝛ to gyue almesse than to destroye ꝛ consume your lyfe here wᵗ wepynes ꝛ cryenges. She sayde syr knyght had I knowen this afore ye had not come herin for I say to you, as I haue sayd too other oftentymes, ye knowe well yᵗ my husbonde loued me so well that for a lytyll bloode yᵗ he sawe me blede on one of my fyngers he is dede, wherfore I shall here deye for the loue of hym. As the knyght herde this he toke leue and wente to the galowes ꝛ whan he was there come, he sawe yᵗ the theef that he left there hangynge was stolen ꝛ caryed awaye, ꝛ began therfore to wexe heuy ꝛ full of sorowe, ꝛ sayd, wo is me what shall I do for I haue loste my lyfe and all my good. And he goynge thus full

of sorowe ꝛ heuynesse, ꝛ wyste not whyche waye to torne hym or to go, at the laste bethought hym to go to y$^{t}$ deuoute ꝛ desolate lady, ꝛ shewe vnto hyr y$^{e}$ heuynesse of his herte, to wyte yf y$^{t}$ she coude gyue hym ony gode counseyll. And whan he was theder come he called, ꝛ she axed the cause of his knockynge. Tho sayd he, madame I am the shyref that was here ryght now w$^{t}$ you, ꝛ I wolde feyne shewe you y$^{e}$ secretes of myn herte. Therfore I praye you for y$^{e}$ loue of god open the dore. and he wente in ꝛ sayd to her O moost vertuous lady I come to haue your counseyll and aduys, for ye knowe well y$^{e}$ lawe of y$^{e}$ londes are that whan so euer ony man is hanged ꝛ stolen awaye of the galowes, than the shyref his lyfe and godes be in y$^{e}$ kynges handes. Nowe it is happened in y$^{e}$ tyme that I was here with you ꝛ warmed me, y$^{e}$ theef is stolen away frome y$^{e}$ galowes, therfore I praye you for the loue of god gyue me your aduys what is me beste to do. She answered I haue compassyon vpon you, for by the lawe ye haue loste lyfe ꝛ goodes to y$^{e}$ kynge. Do nowe after my cou*n*seyll, ꝛ ye shall neyther lese lyfe ne godes. He answered therfore I came to you hopynge to haue gode comforth. She sayd wyll ye than promyse to take me to your wyfe. the knyght answered, wolde god that ye wolde do y$^{t}$, but I fere me leste y$^{t}$ ye wolde dysdeyne so moche to humble you too me y$^{t}$ am so pore a knyght. She sayd I gyue you my wyl therto, ꝛ he yaue her ayen his wyll ꝛ consented too be her knyght durynge his lyfe. Tho sayd she, ye knowe well y$^{t}$ suche a daye my lorde was buryed

whiche for y^e^ loue of me deyed, take hym oute of his sepulture, ⁊ go hange hym in stede of y^e^ theef. The knyght answered lady your cou*n*seyll is good. Tho went they togyder ⁊ opened the graue ⁊ drewe hym out. The knyght sayd howe shall we nowe doo, by cause or the theef was taken, two of his vpper tethe were smyten oute, ⁊ I fere me yf y^t^ were perceyued I shold be dede. She sayd to hym, take a stone and stryke oute two of his tethe. The knyght answered, madame y^t^ may not do for while he lyued he was my wel beloued felowe ⁊ it sholde be to me a grete rebuke, yf I cōmytted soo dysloyall a dede vnto his body beynge dede. She answered for your loue I shall do it, ⁊ toke a stone ⁊ smote out two of his tethe, ⁊ sayd to the shyref, take hy*m* ⁊ hange him vpon y^e^ galowes lyke to y^e^ theef. The knyght sayde I fere me to do it, for y^e^ theef in takynge of hy*m* was wou*n*ded in y^e^ hede, ⁊ he wanted both his eres, ⁊ therfore yf it were serched ⁊ founde otherwyse, it sholde be to my vtter vndoynge. Than sayd she, take out your swerde ⁊ make hym a grete wounde in his hede, ⁊ cut of his eres. O madame god forbede y^t^ I do y^t^ to the dede body y^t^ I loued so well in hys lyfe. Than sayd she, gyue me your swerde ⁊ I shal for y^e^ loue of you do it. ⁊ toke y^e^ swerde ⁊ smote a manly stroke vpon y^e^ dede mānes forhede, ⁊ cut of bothe his eres. And whan she hadde thus done, sayd, now take ⁊ hange hym w^t^out company. ⁊ than y^e^ knyght answered, yet I fere me to ha*n*ge hy*m*, for y^e^ theef wanted both his stones, ⁊ yf that were serched ⁊ fou*n*de w^t^out, all your labour were in vayn.

Then sayd she, I sawe neuer so feerfull a man seyng y^e^ mater so clere ⁊ sure. Take a knyfe ⁊ cut of his stones. And he answered, y^t^ may I not do in no wyse and therfore I pray you spare me, ⁊ y^e^ knowe well what a man is w^t^out his stones. She sayd for y^e^ loue of you I shall do it. And toke ye knyf in her hande ⁊ cutte of husbondes stones, and [sayd] to hym, nowe take this churle thus dysfygured and hange hym vp withoute drede. And went forth togyder and henge vp the body vpo*n* y^e^ galowes ⁊ so was the shyref delyuered out of the ky*n*ges daunger. Tho sayd y^e^ lady, now be ye quyte of all your daungeours ⁊ fere ⁊ all thy sorowes by my cou*n*seyll. And therfore I wyll y^t^ ye wedde me in y^e^ face of y^e^ chyrche. The knyghte sayde I haue made a vowe y^t^ I shal neuer wed other as longe as ye lyue, which I wyl holde. but afterwarde he sayd, O y^e^ moost shameful ⁊ worst woma*n* of al wȳmen who wolde take y^e^ to his wyfe. An honourable ⁊ a louynge knyght was thy husbo*n*de, whiche for a lytel blode y^t^ he sawe of thy fy*n*ger shed dyed. now haste y^u^ smyten out two of his tethe, y^u^ haste cutte of his eeres, ⁊ his stones, ⁊ y^u^ haste made hy*m* a grete wounde in his hede, what deuyll wolde wed y^e^, ⁊ by cause y^t^ y^u^ shal neuer shame more good man, I shal rede y^e^, ⁊ drewe his swerde ⁊ w^t^ one stroke he smote of her hede. The mayster sayd, My lorde haue ye vnderstande what I haue sayd. The emperour sayd, ryght well. Amonges all wymmen was this y^e^ worste ⁊ the knyght rewarded her accordynge so as she sholde no more men shame. And the*m*perour sayd more ouer, O my good mayster myght I

ones here my sone speke I sholde gyue no charge of my lyfe. Tho sayd the mayster, To morowe ye shall here hym speke afore you ℈ afore al y^e^ lordes of thempyre, ℈ he shall shewe y^e^ very trouth of all y^e^ varyaunce betwyxte vs ℈ thempresse as I hope. ℈ toke his leue of themperour ℈ departed.

How y$^{t}$ Dyoclesyan themperours sone co*m*playned on thempres, ℸ how y$^{t}$ he excused him of her co*m*playnt.

And after y$^{t}$ all the maysters assembled togyd$^{r}$ ℸ toke theyr counseyll how ℸ in what maner they shold brynge out y$^{e}$ chylde of pryson ℸ lede to the palays. ℸ tho they went to y$^{e}$ chylde there as he laye in pryson afore the mydday his wyll ℸ his cou*n*seyl to here. To whome y$^{e}$ chylde sayd, what y$^{t}$ shall please you, shall please me, but in no wyse besye you not howe y$^{t}$ I shall answere, or what I shall saye, for w$^{t}$ joye I shal answere to all thy*n*ges y$^{t}$ shal be demau*n*ded of me. Wha*n* y$^{e}$ seuen maysters herde y$^{t}$ they were ryght glad, ℸ clothed hym in purpure ℸ in clothe of golde. ℸ two maysters went afore hym, ℸ one on his ryght honde, an other on his lyfte honde, ℸ y$^{e}$ other thre folowed hym after. ℸ afore them al went xxiiii men w$^{t}$ dyuerse instruments of musyke ℸ brought hym w$^{t}$ grete melody and honour to y$^{e}$ palays. And whan themperour herde al this melody, he demau*n*ded what it was. Then it was tolde hym, Syr emperour it is your sone, y$^{e}$ which

cometh tofore you ꝛt afore all your lordes to speke and excuse hy*m*selfe of all thynges y$^{t}$ are layde to his charge / Themperour sayd, y$^{t}$ is good tydy*n*ges, myght I here my sone speke. And whan ye chylde was come to ye palays he ran vnto his fader ꝛt sayd vnto hy*m*, hayle fader ꝛt my moost honourable. And whan themperour herde y$^{e}$ voyce of his sone he was so glad y$^{t}$ for joye he fyl downe to y$^{e}$ erthe. but y$^{e}$ chylde toke hym lyghtly vp ayen. and whan he was come ayen to hy*m*self, tho begā [the son to declare the whole matter to his father, and there came so great a multitude to the palace to hear the child speak, and the noise of them was so great that the child could not be heard. The emperour considering that, caused money to be thrown into the streets, that the people therwith should be busied out of the palace, the better to hear the child speak; but they regarded not the money. When the emperor perceived that he commanded silence on pain of death. And when they were all still, the child began to speak as followeth: O most dear father, before I speak anything, I entreat you that the empress with all her chamber-maids may be present. So the emperor commanded the empress with all her maids to come without delay. The empress hearing that (in great fear) came with her maids; and the child bade them to stand before the people in a row that he might see them. Then said the child, Sir, behold the chamber-maid that standeth there in green (whom ye

know the empress loveth above all others), command her to be uncloathed before us all, and see what she is. The emperor said, Dear son, that would shame us all, to have a woman stand naked before us. He said, If it be a woman it is my shame; if not, let the shame abide in her. When she was uncloathed she appeared to be a man, whereat they wondered.]

[*The Complaint of the Emperor's Son on the Empress.*]

Thenne sayd the sone vnto the fader, beholde this rybaude that many a nyghte hathe with your wyfe lyen in your chamber in auoutrye, ꝛ haue defouled your bedde. ꝛ therfore the empresse loued hym so well, the whiche ye knewe not. whan the emperour sawe yᵗ he was impacyent ꝛ wrothe, yᵗ he cōmaunded yᵗ she with yᵉ rybaude sholde be brent. yᵉ sone sayd, lorde fader make no haste of yᵗ iugement before that I haue reproued her of the cryme yᵗ she layde vpon me falsely, ꝛ that she vntruly ꝛ falsly hathe complayned ꝛ lyed vpon me. Tho sayd the fader, My dere sone I cōmytte all the iugemente in to your hands. The sone answered yf she be founde false ꝛ a lyer yᵉ lawe shall iuge her. But my dere fader whan ye sent after me at yᵉ instaunce of hyr, then I with my maysters behelde the sterres in yᵉ fyrmamente. ꝛ there we sawe yᵗ yf I sholde speke ony worde within seuen

dayes I sholde haue deyed a shamefull dethe, and therefore that was the cause that I spake not. And where as the empresse sayd ꝑ put vnto me, that I wolde haue oppressed ꝑ rauysshed hyr, in yᵗ she lyeth falsly but she dyd hyr best to haue caused me to do it. And whan she in no wyse coude bryng me therto, she toke me paper penne ꝑ ynke, ꝑ badde me wryte the cause why yᵗ I refused her. And whan yᵗ I had wryten yᵗ I wolde not do or commytte so greate ꝑ abhomynable synne, and also wolde not my faders orcharde defoule, tho began she to tere hyr clothes ꝑ scratche her vysage yᵗ it ran on blode, ꝑ cryed wᵗ a loude voyce, ꝑ cō-mytted vnto me the cryme or blame. And whan yᵉ Emperoure herde this he behelde her wᵗ a fell countenaunce, and sayd to her in this maner, O thou wretched woman was it not suffycyent to fulfyll thy foule ꝑ lecherous appetyte I ꝑ thy rybaude, but wolde also haue hadde my sone. Than fell the Empresse to themperours fote ꝑ she cryed hym mercy. Then yᵉ Emperoure sayd, O thou cursyd ꝑ most vnhappy woman thou askest forgyuenesse ꝑ thou art worthy none to haue, for yᵘ haste deserued to dye in thre maner wyse. The fyrst is yᵗ yᵘ haste done auoutrye. The seconde is that thou haste prouoked and styred my sone to syne ꝑ haste to hym commytted, ꝑ layde yᵉ cryme falsely ꝑ vntruly. And yᵉ thyrde yᵗ thou haste euery daye entyced ꝑ prouoked me wᵗ thy false tales for to put hym to dethe. ꝑ therfore yᵉ lawe shall haue yᵉ course vpon ye, ꝑ iuge the to the dethe.

Then sayd the sone, Fader ye knowe well, that for y^e^ lesynge that she lyed vpon me, I was dayly lad to hangynge. But god with the helpe of my maysters hathe delyuered me. O my moost honourable fader, it was sayd vnto you by y^e^ Empresse that I wolde also by y^e^ helpe of my maysters depose you out of youre Empyre, ⁊ that I laboured to dystroye you, ⁊ for to sette me in your place. Sholde not ye then haue sorowed, Ye haue the Empyre to gouerne, ⁊ wherfore shold I not holde you for my fader. God defende that, for of you I haue my lyuyng. And I shall holde and repute you for my souerayne lorde and fader durynge the terme of my lyfe. And I will not in ony manere depryue you of youre honoure, but I shall laboure and besye my selfe about the gouernaunce of y^e^ same, and all your cōmaundementes I shall fulfyll in every thynge. But it is in lyke wyse as the fader caste his sone in to the see for too drowne hym, bycause he sayd y^t^ he in tyme comynge sholde be his lorde, ⁊ yet y^e^ sone by the helpe of god was saued, and was made a gretter lorde than he was, ⁊ yet was it no hynderaunce to the fader but prouffyte. Also ye sholde see ⁊ remembre y^t^ my lyfe ⁊ gouernaunce shall neuer hynder you but it shal be to your greate solace ⁊ joye. Than sayd y^e^ Emperoure, blessed be almyghty god ⁊ the houre y^t^ I euer begate you, ⁊ deserued to haue such a sone y^t^ I fynde soo wyse ⁊ good in all thynges. Telle me nowe an example by y^e^ whiche I maye parfytly thy wysdome vnderstande, & that myn herte maye the better joye in the. Thenne

sayd the sone fyrst cōmaunde sylence to your people y$^{t}$ I be not letted in my wordes tyll y$^{t}$ I haue done. And whan y$^{t}$ it is ended, gyue sentence w$^{t}$ y$^{e}$ ryght wysnesse of the lawe vpon me and vpon the Empresse. Tho cōmaunded the Emperour sylence. ℣t the chyld began to tell in maner as hereafter foloweth.

## *The Example of Dyoclesyan the Emperours sone.*

There was a knyght whiche hadde but one sone that he loued ryght moche in begynnynge as ye nowe all onely haue me, whome he delyuered to a mayster of ferre cou*n*trees to nourysshe ꝛt to lerne. y^e^ chylde was of a grete wytte ꝛt prouffyted moche and grewe as well in lernynge as in body. And whan he had dwelled with his mayster seuen yere, his fader desyred to see hym, ꝛt sent letters to hym y^t^ he sholde come ayen in to his cou*n*tree ꝛt vysyte his frendes in lyke wyse as ye haue sente for me. The chylde was obedyent to his fader ꝛt came at his cōmau*n*dement of whos comynge he joyed moche, for y^t^ he was as well growen in his membres as in doctryne. To euery man he appered pleasau*n*t and gentylle. It happened vpon a daye y^t^ the fader and the moder syttynge at y^e^ table, ꝛt the chylde seruynge theym, a nyghtyngale came fleynge afore y^e^ wyndowe where as they satte, ꝛt began for to synge so swetely y^t^ they merueyled. And y^e^ knyght sayd, O how swetely this byrde syngeth. well were hym y^t^ coude vnderstande his songe, ꝛt

coude shew the interpretacyon therof. Thenne the sone sayd, my worshypfull fader the song of the nyghtyngale I coude well declare, but I fere your dysplesure. The fader sayd, saye hardely my sone ye interpretacyon of ye byrde, & than ye shall proue whether I shall be angry or not, but I shall marke well ye reason of myn angre. & whan ye sone herde yt he sayd, ye nyghtyngale hath sayd in his songe, that I shall become a grete lorde, yt I shall be honoured & worshypped of all men, & namely of my fader, the whiche shall brynge the water for to wasshe in myn handes, and my moder shall holde the towell. The fader sayd thou shall neuer see yt day suche seruyce of vs to haue, nor none suche dygnyte shall folowe the, and in greate malyce & wodenesse he toke his sone vppon his sholders & ranne to the see & cast hym in it, and sayd, Lye there the interpretatour of ye byrdes songe. The chylde coude swymme, and swymmed to a londe where he was foure dayes without mete or drynke. The fyft daye there came a shyp saylynge, and as the chyld sawe that, he called loude to the shypmen & sayd for the loue of god delyuer me frome the peryll of dethe. The shypmen sawe that it was a fayre yonge man they had compassyon on hym and went with theyr bote and sette hym aborde and in to ferre countrees with them they ledde hym and solde hym there to a duke. The chylde grewe goodly and fayre, & the duke loued hym moche, & hadde him gretely in his fauoure. Uppon a tyme the kynge of yt realme lete calle and assemble all the greate lordes & noble men of his londe to a generall counsell.

This duke prepared ꝯ ordeyned hym to go to y^e^ cou*n*sell, ꝯ marked the wysdome ꝯ the wytte of the chylde ꝯ toke the chylde with hym. And whan they were all gadred ꝯ assembled before the kynge in his cou*n*seyll My welbeloued lordes ꝯ frendes sayd y^e^ kynge, wylle ye wete y^e^ cause wherfore y^t^ I haue called you to this counseylle. Then sayd they all we be all souerayne lorde at your commau*n*demente. Then y^e^ kynge sayd, It is a secrete mater y^t^ I shall shewe you, yf y^t^ ony ma*n* can open it ꝯ declare what y^t^ it sygnyfyeth, I swere ꝯ promytte vnto hym by my crowne y^t^ I shall gyue too hym myn only doughter in maryage, ꝯ he shal be my felowe in my realme duryng my lyfe, ꝯ after my dethe he shall haue ꝯ possede all the hole kyngedome, ꝯ ye mystery of the counseyll is this. Thre rauons alwayes folowe me where so euer that I goo. they leue me not, but cry w^t^ suche horryble voyces, y^t^ it is grete payne for me to here them, ꝯ to beholde theyr lokynges. ꝯ therfore yf ther be ony man y^e^ whiche that knoweth the cause of theyr folowynge, ꝯ can shewe what they mene by theyr cryenge ꝯ voyde theym fro me, w^t^out doubte I shall fulfyll this promyse y^t^ I haue made. ꝯ as the kynge had thus sayd, there was none fou*n*de in all the cou*n*seyll y^t^ wyst the cause or coude moue or put awaye the rauons. Then sayd y^e^ chylde too the duke. My lorde thynke ye that the kynge wyl holde his promyse or worde yf I accomplysshe his wyll and desyre. Than y^e^ duke sayde I thynke he wyll holde y^t^ he hath promysed, but wyl ye y^t^ I gyue the kynge knowledge of you what ye can do.

Then y^e^ chylde sayd, I wyl my lyfe set in pledge ꝛ I shall perfourme ꝛ make it good y^t^ I haue sayd. Whan y^e^ duke herde that he went to the kynge ꝛ sayd, My lorde the kyng, here is a yong ma*n* that is ryght connynge ꝛ wyse, the whiche promyseth for to satysfye ꝛ fulfyl in al thy*n*ges your desyre as touchy*n*ge the rauons yf ye wyll fulfyll that ye haue promysed. The kynge swore by the crowne of his kyngdome, what I haue promysed in al thynges shalbe fulfylled. Tho brought he y^e^ chylde before the kynge, and whan the kynge sawe hym he spake to hym. O fayre chylde can ye gyue answere to my questyon. The chylde sayd, my lorde ye in the best wyse, your questyon is wherfore y^t^ the rauons folowe you ꝛ horrybly crye vpon you. To whiche I answere. Upon a tyme it hapned that two rauons a male ꝛ a female had brought forthe bytwene them the thyrde rauon. vpon the sayd se was so grete famyne ꝛ scarsytee of all maner of thy*n*ges y^t^ men bestes ꝛ foules dyed ꝛ perysshed for defaute. The thyrde rauon y^t^ tyme beynge yonge in the nest the moder lefte it sekynge where she myght best gete her lyuynge, ꝛ came no more to y^e^ neste. The male rauon seynge that with grete penurye and laboure fed the yong rauon tyll that he was able to flye and wha*n* the dere tyde was passed and gone then the female rauon came ayen too the yonge rauon and wolde holde felysshyppe and company with hym. And as the male rauon sawe that, he wolde haue dryuen her away, saynge thus, that she in his grete myscheyf and necessyte lefte hym and his company, and

therfore nowe she sholde wante his company and felysshyppe. She alledged and sayd that she had in his byrthe grete laboure and sorowe, and suffred penurye, and therfore of his company she sholde rather joye than the fader. For this my souerayne lorde they folowe you askynge the ryght jugement whiche of them both shal haue the yonge rauon in theyr company, and this is the cause of theyr horryble clamour and noyse that they make dayly vpon you. But my lorde hadde ye hereupon a ryght wysse sentence gyuen ye sholde neuer more see theym or be troubled w$^{t}$ theyr cryenge. Tho sayd the kynge, for the cause that the moder hath left ℈ forsaken the yonge rauen in his mooste necessyte, it standeth with reason ℈ iustyce y$^{t}$ she shall wante ℈ be without his felyshyp. And where y$^{t}$ she sayth ℈ alledgethe y$^{t}$ in the berynge ℈ byrth of hym she hadde greate payne and traueyle, that helpeth her not, for y$^{t}$ payne was torned in to joye as sone as she sawe the yonge rauen in the worlde. But for y$^{t}$ the male is y$^{e}$ cause of produccyon ℈ generacyon in euery beste, ℈ also y$^{t}$ he the yong rauon in his necessyte sustayned ℈ fedde in to the recoueryng ℈ nourysshynge of his body, therfore I gyue for a iugement ℈ for a sentence dyffinityue y$^{t}$ the yonge rauen shall abyde ℈ holde company w$^{t}$ the fader and not with the moder. And whan the rauons herde this sentence, with a greate noyse ℈ crye they flewe vp in the ayre ℈ were no more seen ne fou*n*de in all that Regyon. Whanne that this was doone y$^{e}$ kynge demaunded of the yonge man what his name

was. He answered I am called Alexander. Tho sayd the kynge, I wyll haue one thynge of you, y^t^ ye frome hens forth shal name ⁊ take me ⁊ none other for your fader but me, for ye shall marye my doughter, and ye shall be possessour of all my realme. The yonge Alexander abode and dwelled stylle with the kynge, and euery man hadde too hym fauour and loue, for he began to haunt and occupy hymselfe in iustes ⁊ in tourneys, wherin at all tymes he had the pryse aboue all other y^t^ were in all Egypte, soo y^t^ his pere or lyke was not founde, ⁊ there was not so harde nor so obscure a questyon put vnto hym but y^t^ he coude assoyle it. At that tyme was there an Emperoure named Tytus, that excelled in gentylnesse, curtesy ⁊ curposyte [curiosity] of all other Emperours kynges and prynces in y^e^ worlde. In so moche y^t^ suche a fame ⁊ noyse flewe ⁊ ranne ouer all the worlde of it, y^t^ what so euer he was y^t^ wolde prouffyte in connynge maners or behauynge, that he sholde go to the Emperours courte. And whan Alexander herd that he sayd to the kynge my most honourable fader ⁊ lorde ye wote well that al the worlde is full of the fame of themperoure so y^t^ it is delectable to abide ⁊ dwel in hys courte wherfore yf it please yow my lorde ⁊ fader I wolde gladly go to hys court that I myght be wyser ⁊ prompter in maners ⁊ behauy*n*ge than I am. Thereupon answered y^e^ kynge, It pleaseth me ryght well, but I wolde that ye take with you plente of golde ⁊ syluer ⁊ other necessaryes, so moche y^t^ ye myn honoure ther w^t^ may saue, ⁊ y^t^ ye may haue also y^t^ is to you requysyte ⁊

behouefull. And also me semeth it were expedyent y$^{t}$ ye afore your departyng sholde mary my doughter. Tho answerd Alexander wyll it please you my lorde too spare me at this tyme ℈ at my comynge home ayen I shall wedde hir w$^{t}$ all honoure as to her apperteyneth. The kynge answered, sythen it is your wyll to go to themperours court I lycence you and therto I consente. Alexander toke leue of the kynge, ℈ toke with hym tresoure ynoughe ℈ went to themperours courte. And whan he was come with a fayre companye, he wente afore the Emperoure ℈ felle on his knees, and salued hym ℈ dyd hym reuerence. Themperoure rose frome his sete imperyall and kyssed hym, ℈ asked of hym of whens ℈ what he was, ℈ wherfore he was comen. He answered and sayd I am sone ℈ heyre to the kynge of Egypte, ℈ am come to do seruyce to your moost hyghe maieste yf it please you to accepte me. Themperour sayd y$^{t}$ he was ryght welcome, ℈ cōmytted hym to his stewarde and made hym his keruer. The stewarde ordeyned hym a fayre chamber ℈ purueyed hym all thynges y$^{t}$ were necessary to the same. And Alexander behaued hym so well ℈ wysely y$^{t}$ in shorte tyme of all people he was beloued. Not longe after that came y$^{e}$ kynges sone of Fraunce to do seruyse to themperoure ℈ to lerne nurture, whome themperour receyued honourably and demaun*n*ded his name ℈ of what kynred he was come. He answered I am sone to the kynge of Frau*n*ce, ℈ I haue to name Lodwyke your seruau*n*te. Tho sayd the Emperoure I haue made Alexander my karuer, ℈ ye

shall be my cuppe berer. y$^{t}$ alwayes ye shall do seruyse afore me at my table. ¶ cōmau*n*ded his stewarde to assygne hym a lodgynge, whome he assygned w$^{t}$ Alexander in his chamber. These were soo lyke in stature, in vysage, ¶ in condycyons y$^{t}$ vnneth y$^{e}$ one myght be dyscerned fro y$^{e}$ other. but y$^{t}$ Alexander was more in cōnyng ¶ lyghtlyer in his dedes than Lodwyke was, for Lodwyk was a femynyne man ¶ shamfast. ¶ these two yong men loued well togyder. This Emperoure had a doughter oonly, named Florentyne, y$^{e}$ which was ryght fayr ¶ gracyous, ¶ shold be his heyre whome he loued entyerly, which had a courte by her selfe ¶ seruau*n*tes to her assygned. To whome y$^{e}$ Emperour euery daye was accustomed to sende frome his table of his deyntes, in tokenyng of loue by y$^{e}$ hande of Alexander, wherupon y$^{e}$ doughter began to haue hym meruaylouslye in her fauoure bycause of his wysdome ¶ his gracyous demenure. It hapned vpon a day Alexander at the mete tyme had suche a besynesse y$^{t}$ he serued not at y$^{e}$ table nor none other gaue attendau*n*ce for hym in his rowme. Lodwyk perceyued y$^{t}$ ¶ serued in his stede. And whan he had serued the Emperoure in his last seruyce vpon his knee, y$^{e}$ Emperoure cōmau*n*ded hy*m* to bere a dysshe vnto his doughter as he was wonte to do, thynkyng hym to be Alexander. Tho toke Lodwyke y$^{e}$ dysshe ¶ yede to y$^{e}$ palays of the Emperours doughter ¶ salued her w$^{t}$ grete reuerence ¶ set y$^{e}$ mete afore her. but vnto y$^{t}$ tyme he had not seen her she perceyued anone y$^{t}$ it was not Alexander, ¶ sayd to hym

in this manere. What is your name, ꝛ whose sone are ye. ꝛ he answered to hyr ꝛ sayd, Madame I am ye kynges sone of Fraunce, ꝛ my name is Lodwyk. She sayd I thanke you of your laboure. ꝛ he toke his leue ꝛ departed. In ye mene tyme came Alexander to ye table. ꝛ they fulfylled ther seruyce. The dyner done anone Lodwyk went to his bedde sore seke. And Alexander apperceyuynge that went to his chamber ꝛ sayd to hym, O my best beloued frende ꝛ felowe Lodwyk how is it with you, ꝛ what is ye cause of your infyrmite. He answered hym and sayd, ye cause of it I knowe not but I fele me soo seke yt I fere me I can not escape ye dethe. Alexander sayd ye cause of your infyrmyte and dysease I knowe well. For to daye whan as ye bare the mete vnto the Emperours doughter, ye behelde hyr vysage ꝛ beaute so feruently, yt your herte is taken ꝛ rauysshed wt her loue. Therupon he answered, O Alexander all the physysyans in the worlde coude not more truly iuge my sekenesse, but I fere it shall be my dethe. Then sayd Alexander, Be of good comforth and I shall helpe you vnto my power. ꝛ yede vnto the market ꝛ bought wt his owne moneye a fayre clothe sette with precyous stones, vnknowynge to Lodwyke ꝛ presented it on his behalue vnto the mayden. ꝛ as she sawe yt she asked hym where he myght that costely ꝛ precyouse cloth fynde to bye. ꝛ he sayd, Madame it is the sone of ye moost crysten kynge yt sendeth it vnto you for youre loue, for he but for one syght yt he hathe had of you is so seke yt he lyeth vpon his bed vnto the

dethe. ¶ therfore yf ye suffre hym to perysshe yé shall neuer recouer ayen your honoure. Tho sayd she, O Alexander wolde ye this counseyll me y^t^ I shold soo lese my vyrgynyte. God defende that. ¶ be ye sure Alexander y^t^ of suche messages ye shall neuer more haue ne wyn thanke. Therfore go ye out of my syght ¶ speke no more therof to me. whanne Alexander herde that he dyd his obeysaunce and departed. y^e^ nexte daye Alexander went ayen to the cyte ¶ bought a chaplet that was two tymes more in value than y^e^ cloth, and therwith he yede to y^e^ maydens chamber ¶ yaue it to hyr on the behalue of Lodwyke. And whan she sawe that costely gyfte she sayd vnto hym in this manere. I marueyle of you y^t^ soo oftentymes as ye haue seen and spoken with me, that ye haue not done your owne erande or spoken for your selfe but for an other. Then he answered, O madame I haue not ben so disposed, by cause that my byrthe is not to be compared with yours. And also it happened me neuer suche a case that my herte was so wounded, ¶ he y^t^ hathe a gode felawe is bounde for to doo hym good ¶ true felysshyp. And therfore moost eccellent pryncesse of youre moost habundaunte pyte haue compassyon vpon hym ¶ make hym hole that ye haue se wounded vnto y^e^ deth that it be not for euer layde vnto your crueltee ¶ impyteouse herte. She answered hym, go your wayes for at this tyme I wyll gyue you none answere therof. And as he herde y^t^ he toke his leue ¶ departed. And the thyrde daye he wente vnto the market ¶ boughte a gyrdell y^t^ thre tymes was more in value ¶ costelyer

than the chaplet was, ℈ presented it vnto her on the behalue of Lodwyk. And whan she sawe ℈ behelde y^t so precyouse, she sayd vnto Alexander, Saye to Lodwyk y^t he come to my chamber aboute y^e thyrde hour in y^e nyght, and he shall fynde y^e dore open. ℈ Alexander herynge that, he was glad, ℈ went to his felow and sayd, My beste beloued felowe be ye of gode comforth, for I haue conquered y^e mayden vnto you, and in this nyght I shall brynge you vnto hyr chamber. And whan y^t was sayd, he stert vp as thoughe that he hadde wakened out of his slepe, ℈ was well reuyued ℈ for grete ioye he was made all hole. And y^e next nyght folowynge Alexander toke Lodwyke ℈ brought hym vnto the chamber of y^e lady w^t whome he was in solace ℈ joye all the nyght, ℈ fro y^t tyme forth all hyr herte was vpon hym so y^t there was but one loue betwyxt them bothe. And after y^t Lodwyke vsed her oftentymes to vysyte. So y^t it came by processe of tyme to the eres of y^e knyghtes of ye courte, how y^t the Emperours doughter was knowen by Lodwyke: ℈ conspyred amonges them selfe how y^t they myght hym therwith all fynde, ℈ hym to take or sle. As Alexander had knowlege therof, he armed hym to withstande them. And whan the knyghtes vnderstode y^t they ferynge Alexander suffred his felowe to go in peas, ℈ Alexander many tymes put hym selfe in ieopardye for hym, he not knowynge therof, but y^e mayde knewe it welle. In shorte tyme after y^t there came letters to Alexander of the dethe of the kynge of Egypt y^t he sholde hastely come and receyue his kyngdome with honour ℈

joye, and that shewed he anone too the mayden and to Lodwyk. and also of his departynge, wherof they were sorowfull ꝯ heuy. he sayd also vnto ye emperour, My mooste redoubted lorde please it you for to vnderstande that I haue receyued letters of the deth of my fader. Wherfore it behoueth me to go ꝯ receyue ye kyngdome, and that ye wyll lycence me to depart, and for all benefetes to [me] done I offre my selfe ꝯ all my godes, ꝯ rather then I sholde by my goynge awaye offende or dysplese you my lorde I shall forsake all my realme ꝯ all yt I haue in ye world, ꝯ abyde wt you styll. Then sayd ye Emperoure, knowe ye for certayne yt of your departynge I am ryght heuy for ye were vnto me the beste seruaunt that was in all my house. But it becometh not an Emperoure to lette his seruauntes frome ther promocyons, or auaun*c*ementes, but soner to promote theym vnto hygher ꝯ gretter honoure. Therfore go ye vnto oure tresourer, ꝯ he shall delyuer you as moche golde as ye wyll haue, ꝯ in ye name of god ꝯ with my blessynge go in to your coun*t*re. and thus Alexander had leue of ye Emperoure ꝯ bad farewell, ꝯ many of ye courte were sorowfull of his departynge, for of all he was beloued. Lodwyk wt the mayden brought hym on his waye well seuen myle. After that Alexander wolde not suffre theym for to go further. then fell they both to ye grou*n*de for grete sorow ꝯ Alexander toke ꝯ lyfte them bothe vp ayen from ye erthe, ꝯ comforted theym with fayre ꝯ swete wordes and sayd, O Lodwyke my moost beloued felawe, I

warne you yᵗ the secretes beynge betwyxt you ⁊ my lady, ye hyde them ⁊ kepe them as preuely as ye may ⁊ take good hede to all thynges, for I wote an other shall come and be in my stede, that shall enuy you of the fauoure ⁊ grace, yᵗ ye stande in wᵗ the Emperoure and daye ⁊ nyght shall lye in a wayte to take you wᵗ a faute, ⁊ to put you to a rebuke. Then answered Lodwyk ⁊ sayd, O Alexander I shall be ware as moche as to me is possyble, but how shall I nowe do whan I wante your company, therfore one thynge I shall desyre of you yᵗ ye wyl take this rynge of me for a remembraunce. Then sayd he I shall for the loue of you gladly receyue yᵉ rynge, ⁊ yet sholde I neuer wᵗoute yᵉ rynge forgete you, ⁊ comytted them too god. Then they embraced eche other aboute yᵉ necke ⁊ kyssed, and so departed frome other. Not longe after yᵗ the kynges sone of Spayne named Guydo was receyued of the Emperoure in yᵉ rowme ⁊ place of Alexander, to whome the stewarde assygned Alexanders place ⁊ chamber, whiche was sore ayenste yᵉ wyll of Lodwyke, but he coude not amende it. Guydo perceyuynge yᵗ Lodwyke ayenst his wyll had hym in his felysshyp, anone he toke ⁊ had enuye ayenst hym so that Lodwyke of a longe tyme for fere of ye sayd Guydo kepte hym out of yᵉ company of yᵉ sayd mayde. Neuerthelesse afterwarde ouercomen with the loue of yᵉ mayden, somtyme haunted ⁊ wente ayen to hyr as he afore tyme had done. Guydo shortly perceyuynge awayted so longe therupon, yᵗ he the trouthe knewe, and was therof in surete that the mayden was by Lod-

wyke knowen ꝯ hadde accompanyed with hym. Uppon a tyme it happened yᵗ the Emperoure stode in hys halle ꝯ praysed gretely Alexander of his gentylnes and wysedome. That herynge Guydo sayde, My lorde he is not soo moche worthy to be cōmended as ye wene for he hath ben a longe whyle a traytour in youre house. Thenne themperoure sayd telle me how. Guydo sayd, ye haue but one doughter oonly, yᵉ whiche shall be your heyre, and yᵗ Lodwyke hathe defouled ꝯ lyen by hyr by the helpe of Alexander: ꝯ he gothe to hyr euery nyght whan it pleaseth hym. and whan yᵉ Emperoure herde yᵗ he was sore meuyd ꝯ wexed angry, ꝯ it happened Lodwyke vpon yᵉ same tyme to come thrugh yᵉ hall and whan the Emperour sawe hym he sayd, what hear I of yᵉ thou euyll and vntrue body. Yf it be founde ꝯ proued true thou shalt deye yᵉ moost shamefull dethe yᵗ cann be deuysed. Lodwyke sayd, My lorde yᵉ emperoure what is yᵉ cause. Guydo answered, I saye ꝯ depose here afore my lorde ayenst the yᵗ thou haste defouled his oonly doughter. ꝯ euery nyght thou goost to hyr ꝯ doost fornycacyon wᵗ her, and yᵗ in batayle I shall proue ꝯ make good vpon thy body wᵗ my body. Thenne sayd Lodwyke I am innocente, ꝯ not defectyue in yᵉ cryme, ꝯ falsely yᵘ puttest yᵗ and layest vpon me, ꝯ therupon I holde yᵉ batayle, for I truste on god thy falshede shall come vpon thyn owne hede. Then yᵉ Emperoure assygned theym the daye of batayle ꝯ fyghtynge. That done Lodwyke went vnto yᵉ mayden ꝯ shewed to her yᵉ cause ꝯ the daye of batayle by the Emperoure

assygned and in what maner Guydo hadde hym accused, and sayd to hyr, Nowe it behoueth me to haue your counseyll, or els I muste deye for why as ye knowe it had not aueyled me to haue a-yensayd the batayle w^t^out I wolde haue yelded myselfe gylty. Guydo is stronge ⁊ hardy in armes that his lyke is none but Alexander, ⁊ I am weyke ⁊ feble ⁊ therfore yf I holde the batayle ayenst hym I am but a dede man, ⁊ so shall ye abyde shamed ⁊ rebuked. Then sayd she, Do my counseyle in that, y^t^ ye mystrust youre selfe. Go hastely vnto my fader, ⁊ saye to hym that ye haue receyued letters, wherby that ye are acertayned that y^e^ lorde your fader is sore seke ⁊ lyeth vppon his dede bed ⁊ desyreth to se you ⁊ speke w^t^ youre persone, ⁊ to dyspose his kyngdome ⁊ his godes afore he departe out of this world, ⁊ desyre his lycence for the loue of your fader y^t^ ye maye go ⁊ vysite hym. ⁊ y^t^ he wyll proroge ⁊ lengthe the daye of bataylle whyles y^t^ ye maye go ⁊ come. And whan ye haue obteyned his congye or lycence, as hastely as ye may go secretely to the kynge Alexander, ⁊ whan ye are come to hym take hym aparte ⁊ shewe hym y^e^ cause of youre comynge ⁊ requyre hym in this youre vtter extremyte y^t^ he wylle vs helpe ⁊ ayde. And whan y^t^ Lodwyke had herd this counseyll, it pleased hym well ⁊ dyde hereafter. Hys leue goten ⁊ lenger daye or terme of batayle prefyxed and assygned departed ⁊ toke his iourneye towardes y^e^ realme of Egypte, ⁊ neuer letted daye nor nyght tyll he came vnto kynge Alexanders castell. ⁊ whan y^e^ kynge Alexander hadde vnderstondynge of his comynge he

was moche glad ꝛ went to mete hym ꝛ receyued him honourably, ꝛ had wonder of his comyñge. Tho sayd Lodwyk, O my dere lorde ꝛ my bestebyloued frende, my lyfe ꝛ my dethe is in youre handes, for as ye sayd to me afore y^t I sholde haue an other felowe y^e whiche sholde lye in a wayte to aspye me ꝛ too destroye me / w^tout I save y^e more wysely to my selfe: ꝛ as longe as I myght I absented me tyll y^t I coude no lenger. But afterwarde y^e kynges sone of Spayne makynge watch soo longe on me tyll that he perceyued y^e trouthe, ꝛ hathe accused me vnto y^e Emperoure, so that frome this daye vnto y^e viii. daye hereafter prefyxed it behoueth me to come ꝛ fyght w^t hym body ayenst body, and as ye knowe well he is a stronge ꝛ an hardy man, and I am weyke ꝛ feble, ꝛ therfore hath Florentyne cou*n*seyled me y^t I sholde not hyde this my charge frome you for she knoweth you for a faythfull frende, ꝛ that ye wolde not leue vs in this necessyte. Then sayd Alexander, is there ony body y^t knoweth of your comyng vnto me for this mater more than Florentyne. He answered hym ꝛ sayd no creature lyuynge, for I toke leue of y^e Emperoure to go ꝛ vysite my fader lyenge greuously seke. Then axed Alexander hym what cou*n*seyll hathe Florentyne gyuen to you howe ꝛ in what wyse I myght helpe you. He sayd, O moost constau*n*t ꝛ faythfull frende, in this wyse she hath cou*n*seylled me, co*n*syderynge y^t we be lyke, y^t ye sholde come ꝛ do y^e batayle wyth hym, no man shall knowe you but she, and the batayll done I shall come ayen to y^e court ꝛ ye vnto youre cou*n*tree. Then he asked whan y^e day

sholde be of the batayle, and he sayd this daye, viii. dayes. Thenne sayd Alexander, yf I sholde this daye tary then can I not come to y$^{t}$ daye prefyxed. Therfore se what I shall do. I haue boden all my subgectes that tomorowe they sholde come ¶ be at my weddynge ¶ brydale. and yf I sholde go than is y$^{t}$ daye loste / and yf I go not ¶ do the batayle thán Florentyne ¶ ye are bothe vndone. what thynke ye nowe beste for to doo. whan Lodwyke herde y$^{t}$ he fell to the erthe ¶ began to syghe ¶ sorowe oute of mesure, saynge, sorow and heuynesse come to me on all sydes. Then sayd Alexander vnto hym, be of good comforte for I shall not forsake you thus, thoughe that I sholde lese my wyf ¶ kyngdome but herken what that I haue thought in so moche as we are bothe lyke: soo y$^{t}$ the one of vs can not be knowen frome y$^{e}$ other but we be bothe togyder ¶ I am not yet gretly knowen here. but my barons ¶ other folke shall take you for me. Therfore here shall ye abyde ¶ tary ¶ mary my wyfe in my stede, ¶ holde y$^{e}$ feest ¶ brydale, ¶ do in all thynges as though I were there my selfe present, excepte whan as ye come to bedde w$^{t}$ my wyfe loke y$^{t}$ ye be there true ¶ faythfull: ¶ I shall w$^{t}$oute taryenge go ¶ take my horse ¶ ryde theder as y$^{e}$ batayle shall be, ¶ yf god gyue me the vyctorye y$^{t}$ I may ouercome ¶ vaynquysshe your enemye, I shall come ayen secretlye, and ye shall go ageyne to youre partyes and dwellynge playce. Thys done, Alexander badde Lodwyke fare well, and toke his journeye towardes y$^{e}$ Emperours courte, for to fyght and to do the batayle with

Guydo. ¶ Lodwyk abode in Egypt in the stede of kynge Alexander, and vpon the next mornynge came Lodwyke as though it hadde be kynge Alexander. ¶ solemply in ye face of the chirche maryed and spoused Alexanders wyfe, ¶ helde ye feest and brydale wt grete royalte of delycate, ¶ precyous metes, plente of all maner wynes, ¶ dyuerse melodyes of instrumentes of musyke, and he made greate joye ¶ chere to all the noble men, ¶ to all other people yt there was assembled. And whan ye nyghte was come, he wente to bedde with ye quene, ¶ layd betwyxt hym and her a naked swerde, wherof she had greate wonder, but no thynge she sayd, and also he laye wt hir euery nyght as longe as Alexander was out. ¶ The kynge Alexander at the daye yt was prefixed ¶ sette, came vnto ye Emperoure ¶ sayd, O most drad souerayne lorde it is so yt I haue left my fader ryght seke. Neuerthelesse I am come for to defende myn honoure ¶ my forwarde to performe. The Emperoure sayd ye do ryght well ¶ accordynge to a noble man, ¶ fortune shall fauoure you in your iuste ¶ ryght wysse quarell. And whan the Emperours doughter vnderstode yt Alexander was comen, anone she sent for him ¶ whan as he was come to hyr she embraced hym, ¶ with ioye ¶ gladnesse she kyste hym, ¶ blessed ye tyme that she myght see hym ayen ¶ demaunded hym where he that hadde lefte hyr frende and louer Lodwyke. Then he shewed ¶ declared vnto hyr all ye processe ¶ how he had left hym kyng in his realme, ¶ toke his leue at hyr, ¶ wente in to Lodwykes chamber, ¶ there was

no creature y$^{t}$ thought otherwyse but it was lodwyk, oonly excepte Florentyne. The next daye folowynge afore er Alexander went vnto y$^{e}$ batayle he sayd vnto y$^{e}$ Emperoure in y$^{e}$ presence of Guydo. My moost redoubted souerayne lord this Guydo hath falsely ⁊ vntruely accused me vnto your noble grace, y$^{t}$ I sholde be of suche aqueyntau*n*ce w$^{t}$ youre doughter y$^{t}$ sholde be vnto y$^{e}$ dyshonoure of your moost noble persone ⁊ hyrs, ⁊ vnto y$^{t}$ I swere ⁊ afferme, by this holy euau*n*gelyes y$^{t}$ she was neuer in ony maner by me in suche wyse knowen as he hathe to you alledged ⁊ enformed, ⁊ that this daye w$^{t}$ the ayde ⁊ y$^{e}$ helpe of god I shall proue ⁊ make good vppon his body. Then sayd Guydo, yet ones I say ayen ⁊ swere by y$^{e}$ holy euaungelyes ⁊ by all y$^{t}$ god hathe made y$^{t}$ thou hast hadde knowledge ⁊ hast defouled y$^{e}$ Emperours doughter, ⁊ y$^{t}$ I shall make good vpon thy hede. where vpon they lepte vpon theyr coursers, ⁊ fyersly ranne togyder w$^{t}$ theyr speres y$^{t}$ they bothe brake ⁊ shyuered in peces, ⁊ theye drewe theyr swerdes ⁊ faught longe togyder, tylle at y$^{e}$ laste Alexander w$^{t}$ grete myght and strengthe at one stroke smote of Guydoes hede, and sent it vnto y$^{e}$ Emperour's doughter wherof she was ryght gladde, ⁊ bare it vnto her fader ⁊ sayd, Fader beholde the hede of hym y$^{t}$ you ⁊ me hath falsely defamed. whan y$^{t}$ the Emperoure perceyued y$^{e}$ vyctory, anone he sent for Alexander whom y$^{t}$ he beleued hadde ben Lodwyk ⁊ sayd, O Lodwyke this daye youre honoure ⁊ my doughters ye haue saued. ye shall stande ⁊ be the more in my grace ⁊ fauour, ⁊ what soeuer

he be that hereafter more defame you he shall for euer stande in my indygnacyon. Alexander answerd, god helpethe ꝛ saueth theym yᵗ trusteth in hym, ꝛ alwayes wreketh yᵉ blode vndeffectyue or innocent. But now my moost redoubted lorde of one thynge I requyre you, at my departynge fro my fader I lefte hym sore seke yᵗ it wyll lyke you for to lycence me to go ꝛ se how it standethe wᵗ hym, ꝛ yf yᵗ it be ony thynge amended I shall incontynent come ayen. Then the Emperour sayd, that pleaseth me well, but ye maye in no manere wyse leue me for fro hensforth I can not be without your presence. Alexander toke leue of yᵉ Emperoure and bad hym fare well, ꝛ rode ayen vnto his realme whome whan Lodwyk sawe he madè greate chere ꝛ gladnesse, ꝛ ryghte frendlye receyued hym ꝛ sayd, O moste true frende of all frendes, tell me howe ye haue done ꝛ spedd in your iourney ꝛ nede, and what ende ye haue brought it to. Then sayd he, goo to yᵉ Emperoure and serue hym as ye haue done tofore. I haue goten you more grace and fauoure of hym than euer ye haue hadde afore tyme ꝛ I haue also smyten of the hede of youre enmye and aduersarye. Then sayd lodwyk, ye haue not only at this tyme saued my lyfe, but many a tymes here afore, yᵉ whiche as yet I can not deserue, but god rewarde you, ꝛ so departed ꝛ wente ayen vnto the Emperoure, ꝛ there was no man that knewe of the absence of Alexander saue oonly Lodwyke. And whan as the nyght was come he wente to bedde with the quene, ꝛ anone he hadde with hyr swete ꝛ frendly wordes ꝛ her embraced ꝛ kyst.

Tho sayd she, ye haue made this tyme all to longe, that ye haue not shewed ony thyng of frendshyp or loue, how may this be. Thenne sayd he, wherfore saye ye that. She sayd, euery nyght as I was in my bed ye haue layde betwyxe you ꝛ me a naked swerde and ye haue neuer tasted or torned you towardes me more than nowe. And whan the kynge herde yᵗ he thought on yᵉ trouthe of hys felowe ꝛ sayd vnto hyr, O my moost dere lady ꝛ quene, it was not do[ne] for none euyll wyll, but for a gode probacōn ꝛ for a perpetuall loue. But she thought in her selfe yᵗ loue shall ye neuer more haue of me, but yᵗ dyspyte she thought I shall auenge vpon the. Tho was there a knyght yᵗ she afore had a lytell loue and fauour vnto, ꝛ she began for to loue hym more ꝛ more, so longe tyll at yᵉ laste they thoughte ꝛ ymagyned how they myght destroye ꝛ sle yᵉ kyng, ꝛ therfor they gate poyson ꝛ poysoned yᵉ kynge, soo yᵗ yf he had not ben ryght stronge of complexyon he had deyed thereof but it wrought in hym so sore yᵗ it caused hym to be yᵉ moost foule and horryble lepre or laser yᵗ euer was sene vpon erthe. The lordes ꝛ noble men of his realme ꝛ the quene also seynge this despysed hym ꝛ sayd, yᵗ it behoued not a lepre to regne vpon vs, for he sholde not procure nor engendre ony fayre or clene heyres. And so he was deposed of yᵉ dygnyte royall, ꝛ dryuen out of his realme. ¶ In the meane tyme deyed the Emperour of Rome, ꝛ Lodwyk wedded yᵉ doughter ꝛ after that Lodwykes fader deyed, so that Lodwyke reygned bothe Emperoure ꝛ kynge of Fraunce at ones. Whan kynge Alexander herde

that he thought in hymselfe, nowe my felowe reygneth togyder vpon thempyre ℔ the realme of Fraunce, to whome maye I better goo than to hym for whome many tymes I haue aduentured my lyfe. and vpon a nyght he rose vp ℔ made hym redy ℔ toke wᵗ hym hys staff ℔ claper, ℔ yede towarde themperours courte. And whan he was come nyghe to yᵉ yate, he set hym amonges other lasers abydynge yᵉ gyuynge of yᵉ almesse. and on a season as yᵉ Emperoure went out of his palays, all yᵉ pore lasers began to rynge theyr clapers, ℔ yᵉ gode kynge Alexander dyd lyke yᵉ other, but there was none almesse gyuen to them. He taryed so longe vnto yᵉ tyme yᵗ themperour was set ℔ serued at yᵉ table. Tho went kynge Alexander vnto yᵉ yate ℔ knocked therat, ℔ the porter asked who was there. Alexander answerd hym I am a pore despysed man, but for yᵉ loue of god I require you yᵗ ye torne not your syght fro my vysage, and yᵗ ye wyll for yᵉ rewarde of god do my message vnto yᵉ Emperour. he asked what is yᵉ mater. Alexander sayd go ℔ tell hym here is a laser that ryght horryble is to see. The whiche prayeth hym for the loue of god ℔ kynge Alexander that he wyll graunte hym this daye to ete his almesse afore hym vpon the erthe in his hall. The porter sayd I wonder that ye dare desyre that of my lorde, for why all the hall is full of lordes ℔ noble men, ℔ yf they beholde you they sholde all abhorre ℔ leue theyr mete. But for so moche as ye haue requyred me so profoundly for yᵉ loue of god I shall go ℔ do youre erande what so euer happen therof. ℔ so he yede forthe afore themperour ℔ dyd his

message. Whan ye Emperour herde ye porter name Alexander ye kynge of Egypte, he sayd to ye porter, go bryng hym in afore me how horryble yt so euer his vysage be, ℸ ordeyne hym a place afore me, yt he may ete his mete afore me in my presence. The porter brought hym in anone, ℸ ordeyned hym a place ℸ set hym to mete afore ye Emperour, ℸ whan he was well refresshed he sayd vnto one of the Emperours seruauntes, My dere frende do me thys erande to ye Emperoure. Saye vnto hym yt I praye hym for ye loue of god ℸ kynge Alexander yt he wylle sende me his cuppe wt wyne. The seruaunt sayd for ye loue of god I shall doo it, but I beleue it wyll not be, for yf ye ones drynke of my lordes cuppe, he wyll no more drynke of ye same. neuerthelesse he dyd ye erande. Anone as the Emperoure herde hym name kynge Alexander, he cōmaunded his cuppe to be fylled of the beste wyne ℸ bere it vnto hym. The whiche wyne whan he hadde receyued it he put it into hys botelle, ℸ toke his rynge yt Lodwyke had gyuen vnto hym ℸ put it in to the cuppe, ℸ sent it ayen vnto ye Emperour, and whan ye Emperoure sawe the rynge anone he knew it yt it was the same yt he had gyuen vnto Alexander in frendeshyp whan yt he departed fro hym, ℸ thoughte in his herte yt Alexander is dede, or ellys this man is merueylously come vnto ye rynge, ℸ cōmaunded anone that the laser sholde not departe vnto ye tyme he had spoken wt hym, for in no wyse he coude haue knowlege of hym nor yet reputed hym for Alexander. after that the dyner was done ℸ ended, the Emperoure toke the seke man aparte

and askyd howe he came by y^e^ rynge. Alexander demaunded yf he knewe well y^e^ rynge. The Emperour sayd, I knowe it ryght well. Alexander sayd, wote ye also to whome ye haue gyuen it. Themperour sayd I wote ryght well. Howe is it than sayd Alexander y^t^ ye knowe not me, for I am Alexander to whome ye haue gyuen y^e^ same rynge. whan the Emperoure herde y^t^ he felle downe to the grounde for sorowe ϒ tare and rente his robys ϒ clothes, ϒ w^t^ grete syghynges and bewaylynges sayd, O Alexander ye be the one halfe of my soule, whehe (*sic*) is your goodlye and delycate body y^t^ was so fayre y^t^ nowe so vnclene ϒ wretchedly is enfecte. he answered, This is me hapned for the grete fydelyte that ye haue done to me in my bedde with my wyfe, whan ye layd a naked swerde betwyxt you ϒ hyr, wherfore she became wrothe ϒ hated me, that she ϒ a knyght that afore tyme she ought hir loue vnto haue impoysened me as ye maye see. ϒ aboue y^t^ they haue dryuen me out of my realme. ϒ whan the Emperoure herde that he for loue toke hym aboute y^e^ necke ϒ kyste hym ϒ sayd, O my moost entyerlye beloued brother, I sorowe to see you in this grete syknesse ϒ mysery, wolde god I myght deye for you, but my moost dere frende, suffre pacyently a lytell tyme tyll y^t^ we haue sente for all y^e^ physycyens ϒ wyse maysters in physyke to haue theyr counseylle ϒ aduyse. yf there be ony remedye or hope of recouerynge of your helthe, ϒ yf it be possyble for to helpe you, we shall neyther spare Empyre lordshyps nor other good temporall to make you hole ϒ sounde. In the meane whyle he was

brought into a fayre chamber rychely appareylled ꝛ appoynted of all maner thynges yᵗ were requysyte ꝛ necessarye for his ease ꝛ helthe. ꝛ in all haste he sente his messangers by all partyes of yᵉ worlde, for yᵉ experte ꝛ moost wyse physycyens yᵗ myght be founde. Of whome within a moneth were come ꝛ assembled before yᵉ Emperoure xxx. yᵉ whiche were ryght experte ꝛ subtyll in yᵉ scyence. To whome themperour sayd, My welbeloued maysters I haue a frende yᵗ greuously is infecte wᵗ a lepry, whome I wolde ryght fayne were heled ꝛ made sounde. ꝛ no thynge theron to spare neyther golde ne syluer ne all yᵉ other goodes yᵗ I haue in this worlde, but I wolde gyue it to recouer hys helthe. The maysters answered ꝛ sayd all yᵗ euer is possyble to be done by physyke yᵗ ye shall sone vnderstande after yᵗ we haue seen the persone. ꝛ forthwᵗ as they had seen hym, ꝛ perceyued yᵉ cause ꝛ mater of yᵉ infyrmyte, they iuged it a dysease vncurable for all yᵉ maysters lyuynge. and whan the Emperoure herde yᵗ he was ryght sory in hys herte, ꝛ remytted it vnto yᵉ helpe of almyghty god callynge vnto hym relygyous men, ꝛ poore people, ꝛ other deuoute persones ꝛ desyred theym to praye to god, yᵗ he wolde wouchesaufe to make hole his frende yᵉ sooner for theyr gode dedes ꝛ prayers. and he hymselfe with manye other fasted ꝛ prayed humbly to almyghty god for yᵉ helth of his frende. Uppon a daye as kynge Alexander was in his prayers, there came vnto hym a voyce saynge Yf the Emperoure wyll wᵗ his owne handes slee hys two sones, whiche his

wyfe hathe born by hym at one burden, ℈ wasshe thy body w^t the blode of them, thy body ℈ thy flesshe shall be as fayre ℈ as clene as y^e flessh of the lytell chyldern. whan kynge Alexander had herde this he thought in hymselfe, this vysyon is not expedyente to be shewed for it is sore ayenste nature y^t ony man sholde slee his owne sones for y^e recoueryng of the helthe of a straunge man. The Emperour nyght ℈ daye laye in his prayers w^t greate deuocyon, ℈ prayed to god for y^e remedye of kynge Alexander. So y^t at the laste there came a voyce vnto hym ℈ sayd, how longe shall ye thus crye ℈ calle vpon me whanne it is openly shewed ℈ notefyed vnto Alexander how that he shall be made hole. The Emperoure herynge that wente vnto Alexander ℈ sayd, Of all frendes y^e beste ℈ mooste true, blessed be the moost hyghe god the whyche neuer faylethe y^t call ℈ truste vpon hym, of whome I haue knowlege y^t it is shewed vnto you howe ℈ in what wyse that ye maye be made hole, wherfore I praye you that ye wyll it openly shewe vnto me that we maye joye togyder. ℈ yf ye nede ony thynge therto that I maye do I shall fulfyll it vntò my powere and for your helthe gyue all y^t I haue. Alexander said Syr I dare not shewe to you how y^t I maye be cured or heled of my maladye, for it excedethe ℈ it is a thynge ayenstè nature for to be done, therfòre I wyll not shewe it to you, howe be it grete truste ℈ confydence is in you. The Emperoure sayde Alexander truste in me, for what so euer is possyble for to be done for the recouerynge of youre helthe I shall

do it ¶ therfore hyde no thynge frome me. Then sayd Alexander I haue of god knowlege y^t^ yf ye wyll slee youre two sones with youre owne handes ¶ wasshe me in theyre blode I sholde be hole, ¶ therfore I haue not shewed it vnto you, for me thynketh it is ayenst nature y^t^ the fader sholde slewe his owne chyldern for y^e^ helthe of a straunge man. The Emperoure sayd saye not y^t^ ye be a straunge man, for I loue you as I do my selfe, ¶ therfore yf I hadde ten chyldern I sholde notte spare one alyue to haue youre helthe. after that y^e^ Emperoure watched ¶ spyed his tyme whan y^e^ Empresse ¶ all ladyes ¶ chambereres were oute of y^e^ waye ¶ whan tyme was he entred into y^e^ chamber where as the chyldern slepte, ¶ drewe out his knyfe ¶ cutte asonder bothe theyr throtes, ¶ gadred y^e^ blode in a vessell, ¶ therin he bathed ¶ wasshed Alexander. ¶ whan he was so bathed his body ¶ flesshe was as fayre ¶ as clene as thought *(sic)* it had ben of a yonge chylde. Then y^e^ emperour had knowlege of his vysage, ¶ kyssed hym say*n*g, O good Alexander nowe I see you in y^e^ same forme whiche I haue often tymes dylected in, blessed be god that euer I hadde thyse chyldern, by y^e^ whome ye be holpen and made hole. ¶ yet wyste no man of the deth of y^e^ chyldern saue oonly y^e^ emperoure ¶ Alexander. ¶ whan as the emperoure sawe y^t^ Alexander was parfytly heled, he sayd vnto hym, I shall ordeyne to you an honeste companye ¶ ye shall go frome hens ten myle the next daye sende vnto me a messager, ¶ y^t^ ye shew openly vnto me of youre comynge, and

I shall then with all solempnyte come ꝛ mete you, ꝛ ye shall abyde with me vnto the tyme that we maye otherwyse prouyde for y^e^ recouerynge of youre realme. This cou*n*seyll pleased Alexander ryght well, ꝛ accordynge to y^e^ same it was done. for on y^e^ nexte daye came y^e^ messager vnto the emperoure shewynge hym y^e^ comynge of kynge Alexander ꝛ whanne the empresse herde that she was ryghte gladde, ꝛ sayd vnto the emperoure, O my lorde haue ye not nowe a cause of greate ioye, that kyng Alexander whome we of a longe tyme haue not seen. and yf it please you to go and mete hym with your lordes and seruau*n*tes, I shall folowe you with my ladyes ꝛ gentylwymen. ꝛ yet wyste she not the dethe of hyr chyldern. Then rode they forth with a grete companye and met with the kynge Alexander and whan they mette togyder, with greate reuerence and honoure they receyued hym, and with grete gladnesse and joye they broughte hym in to the palays. and whanne the tyme of dyner was come Alexander was set at y^e^ table betwyxt y^e^ emperour ꝛ y^e^ empresse ꝛ all the chere y^t^ she coude make she dyd to hym. and whan the Emperour perceyued that, he was ryghte well pleased ꝛ sayd, O myne owne Florentyne I joye aboue all thynges y^t^ ye do ꝛ make to kynge Alexander soo gode chere. Then sayd she, wherfore sholde I not, is not his comynge to vs bothe joye ꝛ gladnesse but more to you my lorde, for this dygnyte y^t^ ye are in by hym ye are promoted, ꝛ many tymes he hathe saued you fro y^e^ dethe. Themperour sayd than I praye you myn owne Florentyne y^t^ ye wyll take

hede to my wordes yᵗ I shall saye to you. Sawe ye not yᵉ foule laser, whiche the laste daye sate before oure table, and prayed me for the loue of god ꝯ kynge Alexander yᵗ I shold gyue hym drynke. she sayd, My lorde I saw hym well a more horryble man I neuer behelde. then sayd Themperoure, I demaunde nowe this of you. I put case yᵗ he were kynge Alexander ꝯ that he in ony wyse coude not be made hole but wᵗ the blood of your sones, the whiche ye in one daye brought in to this worlde, wolde ye not yᵗ theyr bloode were shed that he myght bathe hym therin to yᵉ entente yᵗ by the same he myght haue parfyte helthe as ye nowe se hym in. She sayd my lorde wherfore demaunde ye me yᵗ question. I saye ꝯ lete you haue knowlege for trouthe that yf I hadde ten sones I sholde gladly slee them wᵗ min owne handes to prepare ꝯ ordeyne for hym a bayne, ꝯ sholde wasshe hym therin myne owne selfe, rather than I sholde leue hym in suche peryll. for god myght well sende vs mo chyldern. but suche a true frende were as a thynge impossyble for vs to recouer or fynde. Whan themperour herde this of hyr, he was well contente ꝯ pleased in his mynde ꝯ sayd, O wyfe had ye leuer haue your chyldern dede than Alexander shold be in yᵗ sekenesse of lepery. therfore shall I open and shewe to you nowe yᵉ trouthe of yᵉ mater. That foule laser the whiche ye sawe was Alexander that syttethe here, ꝯ by yᵗ maner he is made hole wᵗ the blode of our sones, ꝯ they are dede: as yᵉ Empresse herde yᵗ she began to sorowe as nature wolde, all thoughe she had sayd afore yᵗ she had leuer see hyr

chyldern dede than she wolde suffre Alexander in suche payne. The nourysshes of y^e^ chyldern vnderstandynge this, w^t^ grete cryenge ⁊ wepynge went to y^e^ nourysshery or chamber of them, ⁊ grete sorowe ⁊ bewaylynge was made thrughe themperours courte for his sones. ⁊ whan the nourysshes came into y^e^ chamber, they fou*n*de the chyldern playnge ⁊ syngynge of y^e^ moost blessed vyrgyne Mary, aue maria gracia plena dn̄s tecum, ⁊ tho went they ayen in all haste vnto y^e^ Emperour ⁊ shewed hym y^t^ his sones were lyuynge ⁊ that about theyr throtes there as they were cutte they haue a cercle of threde of golde, ⁊ therof was grete joy ⁊ gladnesse in all y^e^ courte, ⁊ gaue thankynges vnto al[m]yghty god ⁊ to y^e^ blessed vyrgyne mary his moder of y^t^ grete myracle. after y^t^ themperoure w^t^ a grete multytude and company of people gadred ⁊ assembled went w^t^ Alexander into Egypte ⁊ set hym ayen into his royalte ⁊ possessyon of his Realme ⁊ the quene w^t^ the knyghte whiche lyued togyder in auoutry he dyd the*m* both to be brent in too poudre. And whan this was all done, the Emperoure hadde a syster oonly whom he gaue Alexander vnto his wyfe. And whanne kynge Alexander had all his realme obteyned ayen ⁊ was sette in gode reste ⁊ peas y^e^ Emperoure wente ayen vnto his Empire, ⁊ the kynge Alexander ryght wysely ⁊ manly gouerned hymselfe in all his feates ⁊ actes so y^t^ he ouercame all his enmyes ⁊ rebelles. And whan he was in al his glorye, peas ⁊ myght, he hadde thought ⁊ mynde vpon his fader ⁊ moder, by whome he was caste into the see, which dwelled in ferre partyes

from thens he sent to them a messager ⁊ dyd them to haue knowelege y$^{t}$ the kynge of Egypte vpon suche a daye wolde be w$^{t}$ them to ete ⁊ to drynke ⁊ to make good chere. and whan the messager was come too them, they receyued hym w$^{t}$ grete joye ⁊ with gyftes largely to hym gyue*n* sent hym ayen, saynge y$^{t}$ theyr seruyces sholde be redy at all tymes to do y$^{e}$ kynge plesure but y$^{t}$ coude they neuer by power fully deserue y$^{t}$ he wolde wouchesauf to shewe them y$^{t}$ honoure, wherto they were not worthy, he for to come to them to ete ⁊ to drynke ⁊ sporte hym. The messager went ayen vnto y$^{e}$ kynge ⁊ shewed how gladlye y$^{t}$ they wolde receyue hym, ⁊ what rewarde they had gyuen hym ⁊ how faythfully they were ⁊ redy to do hym seruyce at his cōmau*n*dement, wherew$^{t}$ the kynge was well co*n*tente. And whan y$^{e}$ daye was comen y$^{t}$ was prefyxed, the kynge with a fayre co*m*pany rode towarde his faders house, y$^{e}$ whiche as well to y$^{e}$ knyght his fader as to his moder was vnknowen that he was theyr sone. Whanne the kynge was come nygh vnto his faders castell, the knyght rode to receyue and mete hym, ⁊ whan he come nyghe vnto y$^{e}$ kynge he descended frome his horse ⁊ reuerenced hym with his knee on the erthe, but the kynge toke hym vp shortly, ⁊ comau*n*ded hym to ascende ayen vpon his horse, ⁊ rode so togyder cheke by cheke vnto y$^{e}$ castell. And whan they were come theder the moder came them to mete, ⁊ felle vpon hyr knees to y$^{e}$ erthe ⁊ welcomed hym gladly. The kynge toke hyr louynly vp ⁊ kyssed hyr ryght frendly. ⁊ she sayd, My

moost honorable lorde ye do vnto vs vnworthy grete honour w$^{t}$ the presence of your persone moost honourable, the whiche we neuer more can deserue. After y$^{t}$ all the mete was all redy, ℸ the tyme of y$^{e}$ day was come to go to dyner. The fader came w$^{t}$ a basyn, ℸ with an ewyr, ℸ the moder w$^{t}$ a towell saynge, Syre all thynge is redye, please it you to wasshe. ℸ whan y$^{e}$ kyng sawe that he smyled ℸ sayd vnto hymselfe, Nowe is y$^{e}$ songe of the nyghtyngale true, for my fader ℸ my moder sholde gladly fulfyll as I sayd, yf y$^{t}$ I my selfe wolde therto consente and suffre them to do it. But he wold not suffre theym for to doo too hym suche seruyce, saynge youre aege is for to be honoured and worshypped / ℸ therfore I wyll not of it, and called vnto hym one of his seruauntes the whiche serued hym therof. Thenne sayd the knyght, ye wyll not suffre vs too do it for our honour, for we are not worthy therto. The kynge sayd, haue not I sayd that for your aege I forbere you it. whan y$^{e}$ kynge was set at y$^{e}$ table, he set his moder on y$^{e}$ ryght hande of hym, ℸ his fader on his lefte syde ℸ they as moche as they myght behelde his vysage ℸ cou*n*tenau*n*ce. The dyner ended y$^{e}$ kynge entred in to a chamber, ℸ made y$^{e}$ knyght w$^{t}$ his lady to come in to hym, ℸ comau*n*ded all other to auoyde ℸ goo out. and whan they were thus alone, y$^{e}$ kynge sayd vnto them haue ye no chyldern. They answerd we haue neyther sone ne doughter. and y$^{e}$ kynge sayd had ye neuer none. The knyght answered, we haue hadde one sone, but he is longe

agone dede. The kynge asked of what dethe deyed he. The knyghte sayd, a naturall dethe : Tho sayd y^e^ kynge, yf I maye otherwyse knowe y^t^ he deyed than are y^e^ fou*n*de w^t^ a defawte. Tho asked the knyghte, My lorde wherfore enquyre ye thus after oure sone. The kynge answered, that do I not w^t^out cause, ℈ therfore I wyll knowe of what dethe he deyed. ℈ yf ye wyll not tell me I shall cause you to deye a shamefull dethe. whan they herde that they fell too grou*n*de upon ther knees afore hym ℈ asked hym mercye ℈ forgyuenesse of theyr lyues. The kynge wolde not suffre them to knele, but scortly toke them vp ℈ sayd, To that entente came I not in to your house to ete your brede ℈ to betraye you. but saye me y^e^ trouthe ℈ ye shall be saued, for it is gyuen me to vndesta*n*de that ye haue put hym to dethe, and yf that come in iugemente ye muste deye a shamefull dethe. Than sayd the knyght, lorde pardone me my lyfe ℈ I shall shew you y^e^ very trouthe. The kynge sayd fere not, for I shall do you no harme. Tho sayd he, Souerayne lorde we had a sone oonly y^t^ was wyse ℈ lettred ℈ ryght well vnderstande. And vpon a tyme as he stode afore vs ℈ serued at y^e^ table, There came a nyghtyngale y^t^ ryght swetly songe, whoos songe he began to interprete and tell vs what it mente ℈ sayd : This byrde syngeth that I shall become so grete ℈ myghty a lorde y^t^ it shall be to youre honoure ℈ aduau*n*seme*n*t in suche wyse y^t^ ye my fader shall be gladde to holde y^e^ basyn w^t^ water to wasshe in my handes, ℈ my moder y^e^ towell yf y^t^ I wolde suffre it. And whan I herde y^t^ I was

sore meued ꝯ toke ꝯ caste hym in to y^e^ see for too drowne. Tho sayd the kynge what euyll myght haue come to you yf he hadd ben made so grete ꝯ myghty, me thynketh it sholde haue been youre honoure ꝯ proufyte. The knyghte sayd lorde it was no reason but a woodnesse. The kynge answered: y^t^ was a grete ſolysshnes of you y^t^ ye wolde do ayenst y^e^ ordynaun*n*ce ꝯ wylle of god. But nowe ye shall knowe for trouth y^t^ I am youre sone y^t^ ye caste in to y^e^ see. ꝯ god of his grete mercye ꝯ goodnesse hathe saued me, ꝯ by his grace hathe brought me too this astate ꝯ dygnyte. and y^e^ fader ꝯ moder herynge y^t^ with fere ꝯ joye replenysshed fell flat to y^e^ grou*n*de, whom he louy*n*ly ꝯ frendly toke vp sayng fere not, but rather be glad ꝯ joyous for ye shall no thynge suffre, but my exaltacyon shall be your glorye ꝯ joye ꝯ proufyte ꝯ kyste bothe his fader ꝯ moder w^t^ grete joye ꝯ gladnesse. Tho began y^e^ meder *(sic)* to wepe. Than sayd y^e^ kynge wepe not but be of gode chere for in my realme ye shall be honoured aboue me durynge my lyf ꝯ toke them w^t^ hym in to his realme where they dwelled togyder in honour ꝯ joye, ꝯ ended theyr dayes w^t^ joye ꝯ myrthe.

*Here foloweth y^e^ applycacōn of y^e^ example to purpose.*

T[h]enne sayd the Emperours sone, lorde haue ye vnderstande what I haue sayd. Themperoure sayd ryght well. Tho sayd the sone, My mooste honourable ϒ redoubted fader, all thoughe y^t^ god hathe gyuen ϒ indued me w^t^ wysdome ϒ vnderstandyng aboue many other, y^t^ sholde not be in appayrynge of youre honoure ϒ myght, but more for the preseruacyon of the same. So in lyke wyse y^e^ kynges maieste which was no thynge to y^e^ hynderaunce of his fader, but rather for his worshyp ϒ proufyte, for as long as they lyued they were honoured in his realme. Than sayd themperoure, My dere sone I wyll all hole resygne to you thempyre too gouerne, for I perceyue well by youre narracōn y^t^ ye haue to me declared, y^t^ it is beste to me ϒ moost for myn ease y^t^ I leue this besynesse ϒ labour ϒ take me to more reste, for I am olde ϒ feeble. The sone answered his fader, My lorde fader, so shall it not be, but as longe as ye lyue ye shall haue the auctoryte and myght of thempyre to do and commaunde as it apperteyneth vnto an Emperour, but in all besynesses y^t^ are labourouse I wyll alwayes be redy to mynystre ϒ to serue you accordynge to my dute.

[How Judgement was given upon the Empress and how that she and her Lover were both put to death.

[Then the Emperor commanded the judges and justices to sit in judgement and to bring again the Empress before them; with the Ladies and also the Ribauld, her best beloved, cloathed in the vesture and habit of a woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the Empress; then the Emperor's son asked sentence and just judgement upon them, saying,

[My most honourable Lord and father, even as you are Emperour of the World; and that your majesty and power requireth to do true justice unto all your subjects that desire it: so now I demand that you this day do give right sentence and true judgement upon the untruth, falshood and shame which were put and alledged unto me by the Empress; for the which accusations I have been seven times led unto the gallows and have stood in great jeopardy and peril of my life; and also that she hath been to you untrue of her body as you have seen by good proof made before you; and on the which I ask judgement; and therefore command your Justices and Judges to give sentence thereupon, according to Right, Equity and Law.

[As soon as the Empress heard this, she fell flat to the earth before the Emperor and asked mercy and forgiveness for her just offence and misdoing; but it helped nor profited nothing, for the son would have right and desired Judgement. Then spake the Judges and Justices, her own misdeeds condemn her, and the report of her Lemmon by her kept and found; therefore we give sentence against the Empress, that she shall be bound to a horses tail and drawn through all the streets of the City to the place] of execucyon ⁊ there to be brent. ⁊ we iuge also ⁊ gyue sentence ayenste the rybaude y^t^ he shall be quartred ⁊ smyten in peces ⁊ his flesshe caste vnto y^e^ houndes, and byrdes of y^e^ ayre for to deuoure hym, ⁊ this se*n*tence was approbate ⁊ alowed of all people. ¶ Hereafter in shorte tyme deyed y^e^ Emperoure, ⁊ Dyoclesyan his sone gouerned ⁊ ruled thempyre w^t^ grete wysdome, ⁊ helde ⁊ kept his maysters w^t^ hym in grete honoure ⁊ glorye. By whoos cou*n*seyll ⁊ wysdom he gouerned the Empyre, y^t^ he excelled all his predecessours in rychesse ⁊ in doynge iustice ⁊ ryght. And his maysters loued hym aboue all other thynges in the worlde. So that many tymes they put themselfe in grete perylle ⁊ ieoperdye of ther lyues for hym. And so they ended theyr dayes in grete joye ⁊ honoure, and cōmended theym to almyghty god.

¶ Thus endeth the treatyse of the seuen sages or wyse maysters of Rome. Enprented in Flete Strete in y^e^ sygne of the sone, by me Wynkyn de worde.